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ABSTRACT

This annotated bibliography cites 49 studies of effects of parent involvement on children's academic achievement and the performance of schools. The research tends to treat three broad approaches to parent involvement, namely those that attempt to: (1) improve the parent-child relationship in the context of the family; (2) integrate parents into school programs; and (3) build a strong relationship between school, family, and the larger community. In regard to the first approach, it is noted that the bulk of the research finds that a positive learning environment at home has a powerful impact on student achievement. The second approach is illustrated by Rhoda Becher's extensive review of parent education literature, which finds numerous studies documenting effects of school-based programs that train low-income parents to work with their children. Effects include significantly improved language skills, test performance, and school behavior, as well as important effects on the general educational process. The third approach is illustrated by studies of community involvement which suggest that the degree of parent and community interest in high quality education is the critical factor in the impact of the school environment on the achievement and educational aspirations of students. Directions for future research are indicated. (RH)

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# The Evidence Continues to Grow

## Parent Involvement Improves Student Achievement

An Annotated Bibliography by Anne Henderson

PS 018600

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# THE EVIDENCE CONTINUES TO GROW

## Parent Involvement Improves Student Achievement

Edited and Introduced by

Anne T. Henderson

National Committee for Citizens in Education

PS

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## DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to Carl Marburger, whose well-tempered conviction that parents have an inalienable right to affect what happens to their children in school has been a delightful inspiration to me and countless others.

## PREFACE

When asked if I would write acknowledgements for the predecessor of this report, The Evidence Grows, I declined, on the grounds that it seemed pretentious. Why would a summarizer of others' work want to put on airs about her own, obviously derivative, enterprise? It seemed like setting spotlights around a two-room bungalow.

But the response to The Evidence Grows has been far beyond the expectations (if not the hopes) of its author. With no marketing experts, press agents, or ad campaign, it sold 2,500 copies in five years, and more important, it is widely cited in books, articles, reviews, and other bibliographies from as far away as Australia.

For this updated effort and, belatedly, for its predecessor, I have many to thank. On NCCE staff: Stan Salett, who discovered the passage in Jencks linking PTA's to student achievement and wondered if there were other studies; Bill Rioux, who thought we should publish something about it if there were; Chrissie Bamber, who said repeatedly that there would be no more extensions; Jackie Mosberg, who presided over sales and warned two years ago that we were running out; and Diane Coyte, who managed to get the manuscript into and back out of the computer. Their patience and encouragement is much appreciated.

Then there is Pat Edwards at the Mott Foundation, whose enthusiasm and skillful shepherding of our proposal made essential financial support possible. There was also help from the research community: Joyce Epstein, who sent me the most definitive of her several excellent studies; Sanford Dornbusch, who shared four articles I never would have found otherwise; Derek Toomey, who sent me his fine study from Down Under; and especially Ollie Moles at the Education Department, who fed my habit for more studies and provided constant encouragement and sound advice.

My editor and research assistant, Bruce Brooks, did a splendid job of tracking down elusive studies, distilling their essence, and smoothing out tangled prose. And finally, there is my family: my wonderful husband Basil, who seeing the computer on night after night dubbed this The Evidence Glows, and my darling daughter Amy-Louise, who was the ultimate inspiration.

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## INTRODUCTION

Had I seen all the new studies before selecting the title for this sequel to The Evidence Grows, I might have worded it more strongly, for now the evidence is beyond dispute: parent involvement improves student achievement. When parents are involved, children do better in school, and they go to better schools.

Programs designed with strong parent involvement produce students who perform better than otherwise identical programs that do not involve parents as thoroughly, or that do not involve them at all. Schools that relate well to their communities have student bodies that outperform other schools. Children whose parents help them at home and stay in touch with the school score higher than children of similar aptitude and family background whose parents are not involved. Schools where children are failing improve dramatically when parents are called in to help. And so it goes, on and on.

The effects continue well beyond the short term. Some studies, in fact, have documented measurable differences in achievement for economically disadvantaged high school seniors who graduated years before from preschool programs with high parent participation (Lazar). Some of the major benefits:

- Higher grades and test scores
- Long-term academic achievement
- Positive attitudes and behavior
- More successful programs
- More effective schools.

Before The Evidence Grows was published in 1981, it was not generally recognized that involving parents means improving student achievement. Most articles touching on the topic said that a link had yet to be definitively established, and there was no general review of the literature. That same year, the Reagan Administration successfully persuaded Congress to repeal most parent involvement provisions in federal education law, on the grounds that they undermined the authority of local officials.

Now the education literature is full of references to the importance of involving parents, particularly in early cognitive development. The subject has come into its own as a special topic of research; in fact, it has subdivided into several different areas, such as parent education, early childhood development, effects of family processes on student achievement, even parent influences on the development of gifted children.

And Congress and the Education Department now agree that the

federal government must do far more to encourage parent involvement.

## Coming to Terms

There is definitely far more agreement about the importance of including parents in the educational process. Yet it is still not unusual to hear experienced educators say that once children are in school, their education is best left to the professionals -- that untrained parents might unwittingly interfere with today's sophisticated teaching techniques, or even that turf battles between parents and teachers might disrupt the learning environment. They also argue that the extra time it takes to work with parents would place an intolerable burden on already overworked teachers and principals.

What is happening is that the general agreement seems to break down at the point of actual implementation. David Williams's research at the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory is helpful in understanding why.[1] After extensive questioning of parents, teachers, principals, superintendents, and school board members, Williams found an important discrepancy between the attitudes of parents and educators.

For their part, parents are eager to play all roles at school, from tutor to classroom assistant to decision-maker. While they feel that some activities, such as helping their child with homework, should have more priority than others, they also feel that all roles are relatively important. But professional educators tend to consider only the most traditional roles, such as "school program supporter" or "audience at school functions," to be "important." This means that educators tend to relegate parents to insubstantial, bake-sale roles, leaving parents feeling frustrated, belittled, and left out. Williams's findings are echoed in two studies included in this bibliography (Phillips and Leler).

The research can be very helpful in guiding us out of this dispute. It is very clear everyone benefits when parents are involved, especially children. It tells us that there is no one best way to go about it. Instead, it says that what works is for parents to be involved in a variety of roles over a period of time. The form of parent involvement does not seem to be as important as that it is reasonably well-planned, comprehensive, and long-lasting. (Gordon, Becher)

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[1] David Williams and J. Stallworth, Parent Involvement in Education Project, Executive Summary of the Final Report. Austin, TX: Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, 1983/4.

This is not to say that positive effects take years to surface and that only highly developed programs work. Even a low level of participation can have a powerful statistical effect, as in Jencks's finding that schools with active parent-teacher organizations had higher average student achievement than those without them. The research reviews are also interesting, for they tend to find that many effective programs are so different from each other that all they have in common is parent involvement -- and student achievement. In fact, parents seem to be the one essential ingredient. (Becher, Leler, Goodson and Hess)

## The Studies

Borrowing from Ira Gordon's three well-known models of parent involvement, we can see that the research tends to treat similar broad approaches: those that work to improve the parent-child relationship in the context of the family, those that try to integrate parents into the school program, and those that attempt to build a strong relationship between school, family and the larger community. (Gordon '78)

**Parent-Child Approach: Does helping parents to provide a positive learning environment at home, and to be more effective parent-educators, influence a child's success in school?**

By far the bulk of research has focused on the effects of improving the parent-child relationship, or on what are called "family process variables." These can be family characteristics, such as education and income levels of the parents; family behaviors, such as whether parents read to children and enforce rules about homework and television; family patterns, such as whether the parents are married or employed, and whether the family has a social support network; or family attitudes, such as expectations parents have for their children and the child's self-concept.

These studies tend to divide into two groups. One looks at the home setting of very young children and the effects of certain behaviors or changes in behavior when they later enter school. The other examines the changes in children enrolled in preschool or early elementary grades when their parents are enlisted to engage in supportive home activities. In both cases, the focus is on the home environment, but the effects are measured in terms of performance at school.

In general, these studies find that creating a positive learning environment at home, including encouraging positive attitudes toward education and high expectations of children's success, has a powerful impact on student achievement. Exceptionally gifted students, for example, nearly always have parents who are enthusiastically involved in every aspect of

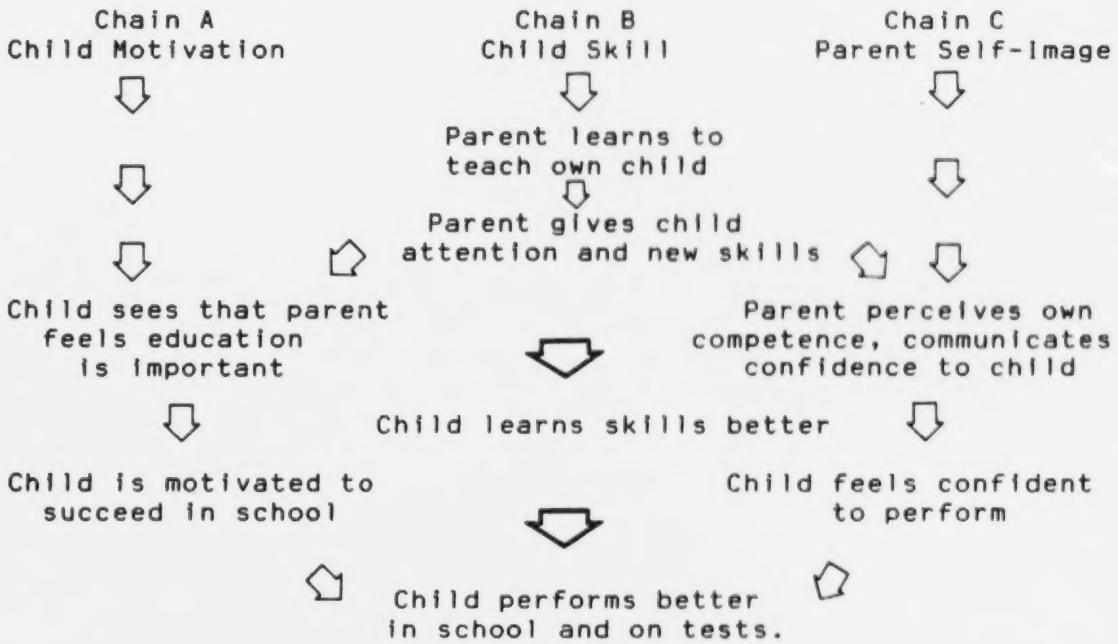
their development, from the first toy piano through the Carnegie Hall debut. (Bloom, Albert and Runco) This holds true across all social, economic, and ethnic backgrounds.

On the other hand, children whose background places them "at risk" of failing or falling far behind will outperform their friends for years if their parents are given training in home teaching techniques.(Radin, Boulder Valley, Bronfenbrenner, Lazar, Gotts, Scott and Davis) Older children whose progress starts to wobble can be straightened out by home reinforcement techniques, where parents reward good performance. (Barth, Karraker)

The reasons for all this success are not necessarily simple. Certainly children will do better with some extra attention and help, but they do much better if it comes from their own parents. (Bronfenbrenner, Tizard, Radin) James Coleman's watershed study Equality of Educational Opportunity (1966) found that students' attitudes about themselves and their control over the environment are critical to achievement, whereas school "inputs" such as class size or teacher education have little effect. These attitudes are formed at home and are the product of myriad interactions between parents, children, and the surrounding community. (Mayeske, Revicki, Cochran and Henderson)

When parents show an interest in their children's education and high expectations for their performance, they are promoting attitudes that are keys to achievement, attitudes that can be formed independently of social class or other external circumstances. It is at this point that the school enters the picture. Schools can encourage parents to work with their children and provide helpful information and skills, thereby reinforcing a positive cycle of development for both parents and students. The studies show clearly that such intervention, whether based at home or at school, and whether begun before or after a child starts school, has significant, long-lasting effects. These effects vary directly with the duration and intensity of the parent involvement. (Mowry)

The opposite, of course, will also be true. If schools treat parents as unimportant, or as negative educational influences on their children, or if they discourage parents from becoming involved, they promote the development of attitudes in the family that inhibit achievement at school. (Coleman '87, Clark) Miriam Stearns developed an excellent diagram that illustrates the motivational dynamics of parent-child interaction (Stearns and Peterson):


Chain A
Child Motivation
Chain B
Child Skill
Chain C
Parent Self-Image
Parent learns to teach own child
Parent gives child attention and new skills
Child sees that parent feels education is important
Parent perceives own competence, communicates confidence to child
Child learns skills better
Child is motivated to succeed in school
Child feels confident to perform
Child performs better in school and on tests.

**School/Program Approach: Does introducing parent involvement to a school or a program within a school improve student achievement? Does it improve the relationship between home and school, so that parents and educators are better attuned to one another and can serve the children more effectively?**

In an extensive review of parent education literature, Rhoda Becher found a wealth of research documenting school-based programs where low-income parents have been trained to work with their children. As a result, there was significant improvement in how well children used language skills, performed on tests, and behaved in school. She also found many important effects of parent involvement on the general educational process. Parents develop more positive attitudes about school and school staff, help gather support in the community, become more active in community affairs, and seek more education for themselves. Teachers devote more time to teaching, experiment more, and develop more student-oriented approaches.

Other studies have looked at the effects of introducing a parent involvement component into a program. In the federal Emergency School Aid, Follow Through, and Title I (now Chapter 1) programs, and in the California Early Childhood Education program, where parents can play a variety of roles as paraprofessionals, decision-makers, home tutors, volunteers,

observers, or co-learners, student achievement seems to vary directly with the level of parent involvement. (Gross, Gordon, Herman and Yeh, Irvine, Wellisch) An interesting study of three performance contracting programs, which were identical except for their parent involvement design, found that the one with the most comprehensive involvement produced significantly higher reading gains for students. (Gillum)

**Community Approach: Does regular and frequent interaction with the community, or building a strong partnership between community and school, improve school effectiveness and student achievement?**

Some researchers have tackled this question from the reverse perspective, by looking at whether schools with high achievement have more community involvement and support than similar schools with low achievement. In a 1969 nationwide study, Edward McDill concluded that the degree of parent and community interest in quality education is "the critical factor in explaining the impact of the high school environment on the achievement and educational aspirations of students." A more focused study of a single large city eight years later reached almost identical conclusions. (Wagenaar) And a very recent report on 22 Milwaukee area school districts found that higher performing schools have considerably greater parent involvement. (Phillips)

Ira Gordon's research on the Parent Education Follow-Through Program, which he classified as a community impact model, is instructive. In this model, parents play six critical roles: volunteer, paid employee, teacher at home, audience, decision-maker, and adult learner. These roles, which he imagined as spokes on a wheel, not only influence their own behavior, but also change the community agencies with which they interact. For the wheel to turn effectively, parent must play <u>all</u> the roles. (Gordon and Olmsted, Revicki) The better planned, more comprehensive, and longer lasting the parent involvement, the more effective the schools become as institutions serving the community. (Armor, Gordon '78)

## <u>Where is the Research Headed?</u>

Taken together, what is most impressive about the research is that it all points in the same direction. So long as parents are the basic ingredient of the improvement strategy, students will do better in school. But parents must be intimately involved; public relations campaigns, one-way communications devices, or dog-and-pony shows are not effective. (Armor, Gillum, Wellisch)

Yet there is much more we need to know. For all the research

on low-income and high-risk children, few studies have addressed whether, and what kinds of, parent involvement works for these students to the extent that they can achieve at levels expected for middle class children. Most studies have instead been designed to compare groups of high-risk students receiving special treatment with control groups of their peers. We know that children who graduate from special early childhood or developmental preschool and kindergarten programs score higher than other, similar children at least throughout their elementary years. But the question remains: do they perform as well as their middle class friends?

Walberg's 1980 study of Chicago students in grades 1-6, for example, found that when parents responded to a program modeled on Jesse Jackson's Operation PUSH, the students gained from .5 to .6 grade equivalents in reading comprehension over students not involved. This is not insignificant, certainly, but their total gain over the course of a year in the program was 1.1 grade equivalents, or about one year, while those not participating gained only .5 equivalents, or about half a year. In other words, the program kept its students from losing ground. What would it take to <u>boost</u> their reading to grade level?

Charles Benson, in his interesting family time-use studies, did treat this question, with less than optimistic results. He found that while the amount of time and types of activities parents spend with their children do make a substantial difference in student achievement, children from low-income families tend to perform below average regardless of how their parents commit time. Parent efforts <u>do</u> reduce the proportion and degree of low achievement, in other words, but they do not overcome the disadvantages of low position on the social and economic ladder.

Benson was not, however, looking at the effects of an intensive program to reinforce the mutual efforts of home and school; he was simply studying family behaviors. David Irvine, studying the effects of a developmental pre-kindergarten program for four- year-olds, found that the program did have an equalizing effect, and that the children who benefited the most were those who had started with the lowest scores. Then, Cochran and Henderson designed and studied an intensive, family oriented early childhood intervention program for three-year-olds featuring home visits and neighborhood-based support groups.

After two years, the children entered school, and a follow-up study began. While the results varied greatly according to race, income, and family structure, the authors generally found that involvement in the program was associated with better performance in school, to the extent that the negative consequences of low income were buffered. It was also clear

that children from low-income families had the most to gain from such a program.

Sanford Dornbusch, as part of a large and continuing study of Bay Area high school students, has found that parenting styles produce significant variations in student achievement. Across ethnic groups, education levels, and family structures, he consistently found that authoritarian styles are associated with the lowest grades, permissive with the next lowest, and "authoritative" (strong, but open to discussion and negotiation) with the highest. He concludes that parenting style is a more powerful predictor of student achievement than parent education, ethnicity, or family structure. He has not yet, however, presented data showing that low-income students from authoritative homes do as well in school as middle-income students.

In a much more intensely focused study of ten poor, black families, Reginald Clark also found that parenting styles were key to achievement, and that the "authoritative", or what Clark also terms "sponsored independence," style is associated with students who are doing well in school regardless of their social and economic background.

Perhaps the most provocative of all the research so far is James Coleman's new study of American high schools. He found that students in private and Catholic high schools perform better than comparable students in public schools: they have higher grades and test scores, they are more likely to graduate, and they are more likely to enroll and stay in college. For independent private schools, this effect can obviously be explained by their practice of selective admission; only students likely to succeed apply and are admitted. But Catholic schools serve a population very similar to the public schools, and still seem to have a greater effect on achievement for students from disadvantaged backgrounds.

This is not because Catholic schools are "better" than public schools; their faculties are not more highly educated, nor are their offerings more diverse or stimulating. It is because, he reasons, they have a different relationship to their community. Public schools perceive themselves as an instrument of society designed to help children overcome the deficiencies of their families. Coleman says private schools, on the other hand, see themselves as extensions not of the social order, but of the families they serve. Catholic schools have the further advantage of acting as agents of a religious community to which these families belong. There is a continuity of values between home and school that reinforces a child's educational experience.

Public schools do not usually serve communities with a set of

shared values; quite the opposite. They take students from a tremendous variety of cultural, economic, and social backgrounds; to act as agents of some families would be to invite lawsuits from others. This country no longer consists of a tapestry of functional communities (if indeed it ever did); its fabric is constantly unravelling and reassembling itself.

This means that schools must take the initiative to encompass parents in the learning process, for without continuity between home and school, children find it very difficult to integrate the separate experiences. (Lightfoot) Coleman points out that there is much public schools can do to increase the sense of community among families and to enhance the value of the school. The relations of parents with one another and with the school can be strengthened so that common standards develop. The structure of schools, particularly at the secondary level, can be adjusted so that students are exposed to fewer teachers over a longer time, allowing bonds with caring adults to develop, and so that staff will know the students well enough to collaborate with their parents.

The issue of parent involvement is much larger than improving reading and math scores. It is central to our democracy that parents and citizens participate in the governing of public institutions. It is also destructive to the family to shut parents out of their children's experience in school. When large numbers of students are deliberately allowed to fall irrevocably behind and then to drop out altogether, it is a clear signal that our institutions are not functioning properly. Parent involvement is not a quick-fix; it is absolutely fundamental to a healthy system of public education.

## Summing Up

What do we know? From the studies so far, we have learned several important things:

1. The family provides the primary educational environment.

2. Involving parents in their children's formal education improves student achievement.

3. Parent involvement is most effective when it is comprehensive, long-lasting, and well-planned.

4. The benefits are not confined to early childhood or the elementary level; there are strong effects from involving parents continuously throughout high school.

5. Involving parents in their own children's education at home is not enough. To ensure the quality of schools as institutions serving the community, parents must be involved at all levels in the school.

6. Children from low-income and minority families have the most to gain when schools involve parents. Parents do not have to be well-educated to help.

7. We cannot look at the school and the home in isolation from one another; we must see how they interconnect with each other and with the world at large.

What do we still need to know? There are many gaps:

1. What type and intensity of parent involvement is needed to raise the achievement level of low-income and minority children to that expected for middle class students?

2. What forms of parent involvement are most appropriate for students in middle, junior high, and high schools?

3. What resources do parents and educators need to be able to work effectively as partners?

4. What are the most appropriate roles for government agencies at the federal, state and local levels in encouraging, nurturing, and expanding parent involvement?

5. What contributions can be made by others in the community, such as local service agencies, employers, business and industry, to help families and schools work better together?

# THE RESEARCH STUDIES

## NOTES TO THE READER

Most of the studies covered in this bibliography are available through the Educational Resource Information Center (ERIC) System. If there is a six-digit number preceded by ED before a reference, a copy of the article or paper may be obtained by calling or writing:

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Throughout the research section there are references to SES; this term is short for socioeconomic status, a concept used pervasively by researchers. SES is more comprehensive than "low-income" and more compact than "social and economic background." I apologize for using such an obvious piece of technical jargon, but I was not able to come up with a substitute that was both precise and accurate.

References throughout the paper to Title I refer to Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, which provides the largest federal program to help children from disadvantaged families. This legislation was changed in 1981, and the program is now known as Chapter 1.

Although we have made an extensive effort to find all the published studies on this topic, this bibliography is undoubtedly incomplete. We would appreciate being informed of any research, either completed or underway, about the effects of involving parents on student achievement.

**Albert, Robert S. and Mark A. Runco** **ED 267 554**
**"Personality and Family Variables and Exceptionally Gifted Boys' Creative Potential"**
**Paper presented at the Convention of the American Psychological Association, Los Angeles, 1985.**

Summary: This longitudinal study of two groups of gifted 12-year-old boys revealed that parent personality and involvement, as expressed through creative activities in the home, was clearly tied to the boys' creative achievement.

The researchers selected two groups of boys (26 with cognitive scores in the 99th percentile in the math-science domain, 28 with IQ scores of more than 150), all from similar socioeconomic background and family structure. Family characteristics were assessed by the Majoribanks Family Environment Inventory, the California Personality Inventory (administered to parents and sons), and extensive family and individual interviews. The boys' creative potential and performance were assessed by a broad variety of instruments, including the Biographical Inventory of Creativity, and by "degree of achieved eminence as measured by awards, citations, honors and the like."

The researchers found that the variable "Mother and Father Involvement" was a significant predictor of creative achievement -- indeed, the highest predictor in the sample of exceptionally-high-IQ boys, though not highest for the math-science group. (In general, the IQ sample had creativity scores more closely tied to family variables than did the math-science group.) The authors conclude that "different types of cognitive exceptionality relate to different patterns of family experiences as these are conveyed by means of their parents' personality traits and their family presses." Among the particular "presses," (i.e. priorities) assessed were discussion of homework, discussion of television or reading material, and parental initiation of a hobby activity.

**Armor, David, and others** **ED 130 243**
**"Analysis of the School Preferred Reading program in Selected Los Angeles Minority Schools"**
**Rand Corporation, Santa Monica, CA, 1976**

Summary: A study of twenty elementary schools with predominantly low-income, minority student bodies, and large or consistent gains in sixth grade reading, found that the more vigorous the school's efforts to involve black parents and community in school decision-making, the better the sixth graders did.

The researchers studied twenty schools with substantial or consistent reading test score gains across sixth grade classes between Spring 1972 and Fall 1975, enrollment of at least 400 students, a balanced distribution among schools with predominantly black or Mexican-American students, and a ranking in the bottom half of family income levels.

Over a four-year period, they collected test score data on the sixth grade students and other information on their ethnic and family background, health, and attendance patterns. Information on school atmosphere, management and administration, teacher characteristics, parent and teacher activities, and approaches to reading instruction were also collected, by interview and questionnaire. Then the data were analyzed to determine which factors affect reading achievement.

Researchers found the following variables to be significantly related to achievement:

- Teacher training in the use of materials keyed to individual student needs.
- Teachers' feelings of efficacy.
- Orderly classrooms.
- High levels of parent-teacher contact.
- Flexibility for teachers to modify and adapt instructional approaches.
- Frequent informal consultations among teachers about the reading program.

The authors found large variations in the degree of parent and community involvement among the schools studied. The key to a high degree of involvement that was well integrated into the school and its activities appears to be the leadership both of school administrators and of concerned community residents. The following table presents a continuum of school-community interaction, from low to high.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| School asks parents to be involved | School provides projects for parents | Outreach programs that benefit community, e.g. welfare or legal rights | Space for parents provided in school | Space with equipment/ services useful to community e.g. sewing machines |

When the predominantly black schools were rank-ordered by level of gains in reading achievement, then rank-ordered by level of

community involvement, there was a high degree of correlation. That is, the schools with the highest gains also had the highest level of community participation. This relationship was not found, however, in the Mexican-American community, where the language barrier may have a strong interfering effect. The authors speculate that if the Spanish community needs and processes were better understood, a relationship between level of involvement and reading gains might be found.

**Barth, Richard** **EJ 215 250**
**"Home-Based Reinforcement of School Behavior: A Review and Analysis"**
**Review of Educational Research, Summer 1979 (Vol. 49 #3, pp. 436-58)**

Summary: Teacher-parent collaboration to reinforce children's positive school behavior at home is effective in improving their academic performance.

This review of 24 studies published mainly in journals of psychology focused on a very specific type of parent involvement, where parents and teachers collaborate on how to reinforce, usually through positive rewards (although occasionally through negative consequences), children's behavior at school.

The system most commonly used was that of sending notes home from school daily. Although the studies varied, from normal classrooms to small groups of disturbed children, from positive reinforcement for good behavior to contingent reinforcement for unacceptable behavior (withholding TV privileges or allowances, for example), and from simple yes-no designs to elaborate contingency systems, they all showed a positive effect either on academic achievement or performance in school, leading to improved achievement (completing homework assignments, less disruptive behavior, etc.)

The systems were effective regardless of the amount of training parents received. Brief, simple instructions were enough for parents to run fairly elaborate programs. Contingent systems seemed to work best for "problem children," positive systems worked well for normal children. Once a program is working, it can be maintained less frequently and still have the same effect. Notes can be sent home only weekly or bi-weekly rather than daily, for example.

**Becher, Rhoda McShane** **ED 247 032**
**"Parent Involvement: A Review of Research and Principles of Successful Practice"**
**National Institute of Education, Washington, D.C., 1984**

Summary: A wide range of educational research documents the crucial role of parents in the development and education of their children, and demonstrates the ways parents can be trained to improve their children's academic achievement.

In this extensive review of the literature on parent involvement in education, the author covers four major areas:

- The role of parents and family in determining children's intelligence, competence, and achievement.
- The effects of parent education programs on student achievement and the characteristics of effective programs.
- The benefits of parent involvement for schools and educators.
- The principles of effective programs for parent involvement.

Examining how parent involvement affects the child, Ms. Becher found that there are several key family "process variables", or ways of behaving, that are clearly related to student achievement. Children with high achievement scores have parents with high expectations for them, who respond to and interact with them frequently, and who see themselves as "teachers" of their children. Parents of high-scoring children also use more complex language, provide problem-solving strategies, act as models of learning and achievement, and reinforce what their children are learning in school.

Becher also found that parent education programs, particularly those training low-income parents to work with their children, are effective in improving how well children use language skills, perform on tests, and behave in school. These programs also produce positive effects on parents' teaching styles, the way they interact with their children, and the home learning environment. The most effective of these programs emphasize the importance of the parent, the need for a close relationship between parent and teacher, structured, concrete tasks for parents, and a long-term approach.

There are many important effects of parent involvement on the general educational process as well. Parents develop more positive attitudes about school and school personnel, help gather support in the community for the program, become more

active in community affairs, develop increased self-confidence, and enroll in other educational programs. Teachers become more proficient in their professional activities, devote more time to teaching, experiment more, and develop a more student-oriented approach. And students increase their academic achievement and cognitive development.

**Benson, Charles S.** **ED 187 439**
**"Household Production of Human Capital: Time Uses of Parents and Children as Inputs"**
**Paper for a National Symposium on Efficacy and Equity in Educational Finance, University of Illinois, May 1979**

Summary: The amount of time and types of activities parents spend with their children make a substantial difference in student achievement, except where socioeconomic factors are very strong. Children from high income families tend to do well; children from low-income families perform below average regardless of how their parents commit time.

Benson and members of the Children's Time Study Project at Berkeley explored the relationship between family socioeconomic status (SES) and student achievement, specifically whether the amount of time and types of activities parents spend with their children affect student achievement, no matter what the family background. Their hypotheses were that high SES parents spend more time with them children and that student achievement is jointly determined by SES and parent time commitment.

Project staff interviewed parents (usually the mothers) of 764 sixth graders in the Oakland, California, public schools and asked them to fill out a questionnaire. Student achievement was measured by the California Test of Basic Skills. SES, achievement levels, and time were divided into high, middle and low. First, SES levels were correlated with parent time available for children and with types of activities. Then patterns of time use were correlated with school achievement, controlling for SES.

The researchers divided parent time and activities into various indicators: Parent's household time availability (the sum of parents' non-working hours), mother's household time availability, cultural activity (reported by parent and child), household time (reported by parent and child), parent involvement (at school or in other organizations), and parent control (guidance of child's time).

Benson found that high SES is related to more time and activities with children. (One exception is that low SES mothers have more time than high SES mothers, largely because

of unemployment). It is interesting that parent control time is not related to SES. Also, he noted that despite the general, significant pattern, many low SES families are in the highest activities time category and many high SES families in the lowest.

The relationship between patterns of time use and student achievement are more complex. In the high SES group, children do well in school regardless of their parents' attentions, but cultural and family group activities help them do even better. In the middle SES group, family activities, parent control, and parent involvement make a substantial difference on student achievement. In the low SES group, parent time and activities are not related to achievement, although family activities, parent control, and helping with homework may count a little.

To explain their findings, Benson speculates that class, neighborhood, and school environments are strong counterweights to individual family influence. High SES children, even when neglected by their parents, tend to have positive support from neighbors, teachers, and their own expectations of success in life. Low SES children, even those with strong, positive families, often are surrounded by negative influences around home and at school. Few expect much employment opportunity. Parent involvement has the greatest impact on school achievement when outside influences are not strongly positive or negative. He concludes that social policy in education would do better to reduce the poverty environment than to put extra resources into schools.

**Benson, Charles S.; Stuart Buckley; and Elliott A. Medrich "Families as Educators: Time Use Contributions to School Achievement" In Guthrie, James (ed) School Finance Policy in the 1980's: A Decade of Conflict (Cambridge, Ballinger, 1980).**

Summary: Children whose parents spend time with them in educational activities, or are involved in school activities, achieve more in school, regardless of socioeconomic status, although different types of activities have differing effects on low-income than middle- or high-income children.

This is a continuation of the Children's Time Study Project at Berkeley, further using the data gathered from the parents of 764 sixth graders in Oakland, California (see Benson's "Household Production of Human Capital.")

In this study, the researchers concentrate on the relationship between specific kinds of parent-child interaction and school performance. First, types of interactions are related to SES

level; then within SES groups, the interactions are related to achievement. Their hypothesis is that according to SES levels, different types of activities have varying effects on achievement.

Parent-child interactions divided into four types. Everyday Interactions (eating dinner together, doing house or yardwork, shopping and watching TV, going to places or events, spending weekend time together), Cultural Enrichment (going to cultural activities, playing games together, encouraging a hobby, participating in outside programs, reading together at home), Parent Involvement (volunteering, joining a parent-teacher organization, attending school functions), and Control over Children's Activities (rules about bedtime, chores, homework, TV and allowances, freedom to move around outside home, and parent pressure).

For all the SES groups taken together, everyday activities and control showed no strong relationship to achievement, but cultural activities and parent involvement were significantly related to the child's achievement. Five of the items were particularly related: visits to cultural centers, doing hobbies together, parent-facilitated participation in organized activities, dinnertime patterns, and doing things together on weekends.

Among low SES children, the effective activities were hobbies, participation in organized activities, having dinner together, and doing things on weekends. Cultural visits, although related to achievement among both high and middle SES children, showed no effect on low SES children.

"In summary we do find some evidence that particular behaviors and interactions reduce the achievement deficit of low SES children when compared with their SES peers... However, we also find that high levels of (parent) inputs are not strongly related to high achievement within the low SES group and that on balance, parental inputs aside, their performance remains well below that of both middle and upper SES children." (Emphasis added.)

This study corroborates Coleman's 1966 study, which concludes that SES has a stronger effect on achievement than anything else. Low SES children who have high parent inputs and who attend low-income schools do better than low SES children who attend higher-income schools but have low parent inputs. In other words, parent inputs do reduce the proportion of low achievers, but they do not overcome the disadvantages of low-income.

**Bloom, B. S.**
**Developing Talent in Young People**
**Ballantine Books, New York: 1985**

Summary: A study of several groups of extremely talented young professionals who are recognized highly in their difficult, competitive fields -- research mathematics, research neurology, classical piano, swimming, tennis, and other arts and sciences --showed that the most common characteristic of their general education, specialized training, and subsequent achievement was enthusiastic parent involvement.

The author conducted far-ranging interviews with about 20-25 very successful young people (age from 28 - 35) in each of the fields, and talked extensively with their families as well. He selected the subjects for their similar level of brilliant achievement within the field, and then generally looked for common features of growth and guidance that contributed to their outstanding realization of talent.

The subjects varied widely in most features of background (ethnicity, socioeconomic status). Yet almost all spoke of lifelong support from their parents, for their general education as well as for their specialized pursuits. In most cases this support meant not only a constant and direct parent involvement in schooling, lessons, and competitions, but more important, a consistent support at home for any educational ambitions. The message parents sent constantly was they completely encouraged their children's growing commitment to music or science or sport.

In every case, the student's special training progressed beyond the parents' expertise, and thus rendered parent help unnecessary after an initial phase of support; but the encouragement continued even when the child's accomplishment excluded the parents direct involvement. And in almost every case, the parents' enthusiasm stood as the young stars' main reference point that the difficult goal they were pursuing was entirely worthwhile, and fully within their reach.

**Boulder Valley, Colorado, School District ED 116 791**
**"A Personalized Kindergarten Program with Supplementary Parent Involvement: Final Report"**
**Sponsored by the Bureau of Elementary and Secondary Education, Office of Education, June, 1975**

Summary: "High Need" children who received teacher-designed home stimulation by their parents scored significantly higher on standardized tests and were able to maintain their gains longer than other "high need" children who attended only an in-school program.

This study examines a three-pronged approach to bringing kindergarten children with developmental lags up to an acceptable level of performance by the start of first grade. Diagnostic observation and testing, staff training for individualized instruction, and parent involvement were used over a three-year period.

The researchers tested children entering kindergarten and identified a "high need" group. They assigned part of this group at random to receive parent involvement in addition to the individualized instruction all the children received in the classroom. Both groups were tested at the end of kindergarten on the Metropolitan Reading Readiness Test and Boehm Test of Basic Concepts, and again at the beginning of first grade, to measure how well their gains were maintained.

Parents of the experimental children met with the teacher every two weeks and were given workshops and suggestions on activities particular to their child's developmental needs. They then spent ten minutes a day with their children on specific educational activities.

Both groups of "high need" children scored in the normal range at the end of kindergarten on both tests. But at the beginning of first grade, the group who had received home stimulation showed a markedly higher level of maintaining their gains than the "high need" children who had received only the in-school program.

**Bronfenbrenner, Urie** **ED 093 501**
**"A Report on Longitudinal Evaluations of Preschool Programs, Vol. II: Is Early Intervention Effective?"**
**Office of Child Development, DHEW, 1974**

Summary: Children who are the subjects of early educational intervention programs show higher and more lasting gains if their mothers are actively involved in their learning.

This is an analysis of several studies of different educational intervention programs for disadvantaged children. Bronfenbrenner contends that long-term IQ gains can be achieved by early intervention only when the parent-child relationship is properly treated, and looks at some current studies to see if they bear out his theory.

Three studies instituted home visits by tutor/teachers, but parent involvement was voluntary and passive. They reported insignificant long-term gains.

The remaining three studies designed more active parent involvement, where mothers received training in how to stimulate verbal interaction with their children. The most impressive, long-lasting gains were made in a 2-year program where tutors visited homes twice a week and demonstrated toy kits to mothers and children. Less frequent sessions or training just for mothers (when children were not present) were not as effective.

He concludes that parent intervention acts as a kind of fixative, stabilizing effects produced by other processes, and that it is effective only when the target is neither the child nor the parent, but the parent/child system.

**Clark, Reginald M.**
**Family Life and School Achievement: Why Poor Black Children Succeed or Fail**
**University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1983**

Summary: An intensely focused study of ten poor, black families and their high school aged children finds that a family's overall cultural style, not marital status, educational level, income, or social surroundings, is what determines whether children are prepared for competent performance at school.

Some poor black families produce children who do well in school; others do not. Convinced that the family characteristics traditionally used in educational research, such as income level, mother's educational background, parents' marital status, ethnicity, and so on, do not explain why some children succeed and others fall behind, Clark conducted intensive case studies of ten families living in public housing projects in Chicago. Five had a senior high school student who was doing well academically (top 20 percent of their class); five had a senior high school student in the bottom 20 percent of their class.

To demonstrate that the number of parents at home is not necessarily related to achievement, Clark selected both one and two-parent families for each category:

| Family type | Successful Students | Less Successful Students |
|---|---|---|
| One Parent | 3 | 2 |
| Two Parents | 2 | 3 |

He visited with each family for at least two whole days and observed its structure and interrelationships within the

following framework:

1. Family theme and background: Names, ages, religion, residence, educational backgrounds, social history, group affiliations, etc.

2. Early child-rearing and familial practices: Events of child's formative years, early training and value orientation, early family dynamics.

3. Mental health: Student's values, attitudes, and personality.

4. Home living patterns: Routine living patterns such as living arrangements and money handling, family relations, rules of the house, power relationships, methods of discipline, parents' approach to student's time and space, division of labor.

5. Intellectuality at home: Approach to homework, study, and other educational activities, aspirations and expectations of parents and children, contact with the school, parents' monitoring and instructional activities.

Clark found that in the high achievers' homes, regardless of whether the family had one or two parents, certain patterns appeared time and again. These families were characterized by frequent dialogues between parents and children, strong parent encouragement of academic pursuits, clear and consistent limits for children, warm and nurturing interactions, and consistent monitoring of how time is used. Clark terms this style of parenting "sponsored independence" and points out that it is also known as "authoritative." (see Dornbusch)

Parents of high achieving children also seem to hold common attitudes toward education. They are willing to put their children's growth and development before their own, and they feel responsible for helping their children gain a general fund of knowledge and basic literacy skills. These parents also feel that pursuing knowledge is their <u>children's</u> responsibility and expect them to participate in some form of secondary school training.

In terms of their relationship to the school, parents of children who do well show great concern about the school's success with its students and believe that only with parent input will the school provide sound training. These parents also visit the school periodically, get acquainted with the teachers, and become involved in various activities.

About the parents of less successful children, Clark describes the circumstances of their lives and quotes James Baldwin,

"...the wonder is not that so many are ruined but that so many survive."

Their parenting style is one Clark terms "unsponsored independence" and is marked by loose social ties and less parent vigilance in supervision. The students recalled few instances when teachers had provided encouragement of their efforts, and their classroom experiences had fostered negative expectations for success. Parents almost never visited the school, except in response to a negative report, and certainly never paid a spontaneous call on their children's teachers. There was no positive, reinforcing pattern of school-home encouragement.

Clark concludes with lengthy lists of areas for further research, and some excellent suggestions for family communication.

**Cochran, Moncrieff, and Charles R. Henderson, Jr. ED 262 862**
**"Family Matters: Evaluation of the Parental Empowerment Program"**
**Cornell University, Ithaca, N.Y., 1986**

Summary: An intensive, family-oriented early childhood intervention program featuring home visits and neighborhood-based parent support groups produced positive effects in student achievement when the children entered public school, especially for children from two-parent families and for children from low-income families.

The program was offered to 160 families, each with a three-year-old child, in ten different neighborhoods in Syracuse, New York. Paraprofessionals were trained to give information about child rearing and to demonstrate examples of parent-child learning activities in a series of home visits designed to reinforce the parents' feelings of importance and effectiveness.

Once the workers and families were introduced, group meetings among neighboring project families were arranged. At the meetings, families were encouraged to turn to one another as resources. Families participated for twenty-four months, until the children entered school; then researchers collected follow-up data on student performance from report cards and teacher evaluation.

The findings were subjected to intensive analysis based on family structure (married/unmarried), income, race (black/white), education (more or less than 12 years), parent perceptions of effectiveness, parent-child activities, types of communication with the school, and development of a family

support network. All were compared to a matched control group. While the results varied greatly according to race, income, and family structure, in general the finding was that involvement in the program is associated with better performance in school, and that the program tended to buffer the negative consequences of low socioeconomic status.

Although it is not possible to describe all the variations and combinations of program effects here, the researchers did note that children of single parents tended to do less well in school, unless the parents were able to develop a social support network. This strongly suggests that couples are better able to use their experiences in the program to help their children develop, while single parents need to develop self-confidence and social network support before they can benefit. "Parents with positive and realistic views of their capacities as parents are likely to make good use of available social supports and place high priority on activities with their children." This, in turn, leads to their children's success in school.

The authors conclude that the school can, without major alteration of its basic educational mission, be a powerful force for building parent capacity.

First, school personnel can strengthen parents' appreciation of their important role by providing positive feedback at every opportunity. Communications between home and school should be positive and preventive rather than negative and remedial.

Second, schools can do much to strengthen informal social supports for parents, by such simple means as providing a list of children's names, addresses and phone numbers, holding get-togethers, and sponsoring a parent organization.

Third, staff can provide parents with information and materials to help them work with their children at home, to complement and reinforce what is being taught at school.

Fourth, educators must make it clear to parents that they are valuable allies in the educational process, with a great deal to offer.

**Coleman, James S., et al.**
**Equality of Educational Opportunity**
**U. S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, Washington, D.C., U. S. Government Printing Office, 1966**

This massive study, the first of its kind on student achievement, did not directly consider the relationship of parent involvement to student performance. It did, however,

produce a large bank of data, which have been drawn upon by many other researchers, notably Mayeske and Jencks.

Among the major findings of the Coleman report were that family background is of critical importance in school achievement, and that attitudes including self-concept and a sense of control over one's environment, which are formed largely at home, are highly related to achievement in school.

**Coleman, James S. and Thomas Hoffer**
**Public and Private High Schools: The Impact of Communities**
**Basic Books, Inc., New York, 1987**

Summary: In this continuation of their 1982 study, the authors find that students in private and Catholic high schools perform better than students from comparable backgrounds in public schools, and they speculate that the critical difference lies in the relationship of schools to the communities they serve.

In 1980, the National Center for Education Statistics, an arm of the U.S. Department of Education, sponsored a large-scale study of sophomores and seniors in 1015 public and private high schools. This study is known as the "High School and Beyond Survey." The authors were asked to look at the data collected to examine two questions related to private schools: the extent to which private schools affect racial/religious/income divisions in society, and the relative academic performance of private vs. public schools.

The resulting study, High School Achievement (1982), found that students in private and Catholic schools performed approximately one grade level higher on standardized tests of verbal and math achievement than their comparable public school counterparts. In Catholic schools, this effectiveness was especially pronounced for students from "disadvantaged backgrounds," that is, those with less well-educated parents and from black and Hispanic families. The authors also found that private schools do not contribute measurably to racial or economic segregation.

In 1982, NCES collected follow-up data on the students who were sophomores in 1980. This made it possible for the authors to double-check their conclusions and to do additional analysis. The new findings are that not only do students who attend private and Catholic schools do better in school, they are also more likely to graduate, to enroll in college, and to continue their college studies once enrolled.

The authors speculate that the reason for the difference in student performance lies in the relationship between families and the schools. Public schools, they contend, see the school

as an instrument of society intended to free the child from constraints imposed by the accident of birth. Private schools, on the other hand, see the school as an agent not of society, but of the family, as an extension of the parents' will. While Catholic schools act as an agent of the religious community of which the family is a part, independent private schools are agents of the parents in a more individualistic sense.

One indication of the difference in relationships between schools and families is the level of parent involvement. The following chart, reproduced from the book, indicates that the percentage of private and Catholic school parents who are involved in their children's education is higher than that in public schools:

| Annual Parent Activities | Public | Catholic | Private | Elite Private |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Parent-Teacher Conference | 39.2% | 56.4% | 47.3% | 64.4% |
| PTA Meeting | 19.9 | 35.1 | 33.3 | 23.8 |
| Visiting Classes | 21.0 | 25.2 | 22.9 | 26.8 |
| Contacting Educator if Student Had Problem | 45.5 | 43.1 | 49.8 | 51.6 |
| Volunteer Work | 27.2 | 45.8 | 43.6 | 47.2 |

When administrators are asked about levels of parent interest in student progress or school affairs, there is a striking disparity between public and Catholic schools. Public school officials also report that they are more likely to have hostile confrontations with parents. For Catholic schools, this disparity does not appear to be explained by difference in family backgrounds, although for other private school parents income and educational advantages do seem to be the explanation. The authors feel this underscores their argument that the functional community around the Catholic school induces parents to participate who would otherwise be uninvolved.

The authors devote considerable analysis to their thesis that the Catholic school community works to overcome disadvantages such as low income and educational levels, and family deficits such as single or working parents. They find that within Catholic schools, there is a greater achievement effect for students who are Catholic rather than non-Catholic, and for Catholic students who are integrated into the religious community rather than those who do not attend church. The same effect appears in their analysis of relative dropout rates.

What are the implications for public schools? The authors recommend that schools attempt to increase the social resources available to students through organizing collective events, changing school structure so that students have more intensive contact with a smaller number of teachers, and strengthening the relations of parents with one another and with the school. Educators must recognize "that the social capital that exists in the community, its power to make and enforce norms for the youth of the school, is not fixed and immutable but can be affected by the actions of the school."

**Comer, James P.**
**School Power**
**New York, MacMillan, The Free Press, 1980**

Summary: A long-term program to change the governance and organization of two inner-city New Haven schools, partly by including substantial parent involvement, resulted in significant, lasting gains in student achievement.

In 1968, the Yale Child Study Center, the National Institute for Minority Group Studies, and the local Title I program began a five-year collaborative venture in two inner-city New Haven elementary schools, to improve the quality of living and learning. The program goals were:

1. To modify the social and psychological climate of the school in a way that facilitates learning.

2. To improve the achievement of basic skills at a statistically significant level.

3. To raise motivation for learning, mastery and achievement, to increase the academic and occupational aspirations of each child.

4. To develop patterns of shared responsibility and decision making among parents and staff.

5. To develop an organizational relationship between child development and clinical services and the New Haven public schools.

To administer the project, the team organized several new structures. A governance body, similar to a board of directors, composed of administrators, teachers, parents, aides, and professional support staff, gave overall guidance and direction. School committees, with elected parent representatives, selected staff and curriculum, and evaluated the program. The pupil personnel team arranged necessary services for teachers, aides, and students. The parent program

provided stipends for 10-12 parents who became teacher aides. Workshops were held for two weeks each summer to bring parents and teachers together, and an extended day program was held three days a week to provide teacher training and parent participation programs.

A variety of evaluative methods were used, including consumer evaluations, reports of outside evaluators, test scores, and program studies. No control groups were used for comparison, to quell charges that the children were being treated like "guinea pigs."

During the first five years, both schools attained the best attendance records in the city, greatly reduced student behavior problems, minimized parent-staff conflict, and achieved near grade-level academic performance. At King School, which continued the program after the five-year project ended, all the program goals were achieved. Since 1975, students at King rank ahead of all other inner-city schools in reading and math skills, and moved from 20th in reading and 31st in math to 10th place in both among all New Haven schools.

Comer concludes ". . . No particular model, technology, method, or person is as important to improved student behavior and learning as a process that places highest priority on flexibility, accountability, shared expertise, open communication, trust, and respect."

**Dornbusch, Sanford; Phillip Ritter; P. Herbert Leiderman; Donald F. Roberts; and Michael Fraleigh**
**"The Relation of Parenting Style to Adolescent School Performance"**
**To be published in Child Development, 1987**

Summary: A study of San Francisco area high school students found significant and very consistent relationships between parenting styles and student grades.

To study the relative effects of different parenting styles on student performance, the authors distributed a questionnaire to 7,836 students attending six high schools in the San Francisco Bay Area. About 88 percent of the total enrollment responded. Additional data were gathered from an earlier survey (1983) of students in five of the same schools, and from a family questionnaire sent to the homes of all students in the 1986 sample. Questions covered student background, self-reported grades, perceptions of parent attitudes and behavior, and family communication patterns.

Three parenting styles are identified and correlated with student grades, parent education levels, ethnicity, and family structure.

- Authoritarian: Parents tell children not to argue with or question adults, punish children for poor grades, and respond to good grades with instructions to do even better.

- Permissive: Parents seem indifferent to grades whether poor or good, do not stress working hard, establish no rules about watching television, and are not involved in education, either at home or at school.

- Authoritative: Parents tell children to look at both sides of an issue and admit that kids sometimes know more; they talk about family politics and encourage all family members to participate in decisions; they respond to good grades with praise, to bad grades with some restrictions and offers of help and encouragement.

Across ethnic groups, education levels, and family structures, the authors consistently found that authoritarian parenting was associated with the lowest grades, permissive parenting with the next lowest, and authoritative with the highest grades. Inconsistent parenting, or switching from one style to the other, is also strongly associated with low grades.

There are some interesting variations on this theme. Hispanic females react very negatively to authoritarian parenting, while Hispanic males do not. Asian students do well in school regardless of parenting styles, although there is a negative relationship with authoritarian parenting. Students from single parent families tend to do less well; their parents' styles tend to be permissive or inconsistent.

Perhaps the most significant finding is that parenting style, or variations in family processes, is a more powerful predictor of student achievement than parent education, ethnicity, or family structure.

**Dornbusch, Sanford**
**"Helping Your Kid Make the Grade"**
**The Stanford Magazine, Palo Alto, CA, Summer 1986**

Summary: Another analysis of the survey of 8,000 high school students finds that family behavior patterns influence grades, and that parent attendance at school events, regardless of parent income or education level, is strongly linked to better grades.

In this study, the major question the researchers tried to answer is: regardless of things such as parents' income level, ethnic background, and education level, what family patterns pay off in the form of better grades? Survey data were collected from about 8,000 students attending six high schools in the San Francisco Bay Area. Also responding were about 300 teachers and 3500 parents.

The most important family background variable is parent education. While ethnic background and income can be correlated with high or lower performance, it is their relation to levels of education that is key. For example, if income could be separated from other factors, it is not a good predictor of grades; it is, instead a good predictor of parent education, which in turn is a good predictor of grades.

But are there family behaviors that can make a difference in student grades no matter what the income or education level of the parents?

The answer is clearly yes. "The degree of parental participation in such school functions as Open School Nights, regardless of parents' own educational attainment, is strongly linked to grades." The authors suggest that educators consider ways to make it easier for parents to attend school functions and to encourage parents to make that extra effort.

Another important family behavior is the reaction of parents to good or poor grades. The author found that pretending to ignore bad grades is not an effective response, nor is yelling and getting upset. Another technique that seems to hurt more than it helps is using extrinsic rewards and punishments, such as cars, curfews, or restrictions. What seems to be most helpful is encouragement. "Kids who get better grades tend to have parents who praise, encourage, and offer to help them. More to the point, such low-key positive responses go along with improvement in grades over time."

**Epstein, Joyce L.**
**"Effects on Student Achievement of Teachers' Practices of Parental Involvement"**
**Chapter to appear in S. Silvern (ed) Literacy Through Family, Community and School Interaction, JAI Press, Greenwich, CT, 1987**

Summary: In surveying research on parental involvement and student achievement, the author states: "There is consistent evidence that parents' encouragement, activities, interest at home and their participation at school affect their children's

achievement, even after the students' ability and family socioeconomic status is taken into account."

One in a series of important studies Epstein has done on the effects of teachers' practices of parent involvement at the Johns Hopkins Center for Research on Elementary and Middle Schools, this study uses longitudinal data from 293 third and fifth grade students who took the California Achievement Test (CAT) in the fall and spring of the 1980-81 school year. The students were in the classrooms of 14 teachers who varied in their emphasis on parental involvement, classified by themselves and their principals as frequent users, infrequent users, and non-users.

Analysis of test scores for fall and spring show that "teacher leadership in parent involvement in learning activities at home positively and significantly influences change in reading achievement." In addition, parents who reported they learned more during the year than they previously knew about their child's instructional program (i.e., "parents who are helped to help their children") had a positive effect on reading achievement, as did parents with higher educational backgrounds ("parents who usually help their children").

A significant relationship between parental involvement practices and math achievement was <u>not</u> found. In addition, an index of overall teacher quality was not correlated with math achievement, though it was correlated with reading. The author's discussion of these differences included reports that reading activities are teachers' most frequently used and enjoyed parent involvement practices, and that principals encourage teachers to initiate parental involvement in reading activities more than activities in any other subject. Thus, the author concludes, "there is little reason to expect that these (reading) activities would have direct and immediate effects on students' math skills." This would require teachers' sequential and coordinated practices to involve parents in math activities.

Finally, Epstein concludes, "students gain in personal and academic development if their families emphasize schooling, let their children know they do, and do so continually over the school years."

Gallagher, James J., et al. ED 125 773
"Parent Involvement, Parent-Teacher Interaction and Child Development"
Paper presented at the Biennial Southeastern Conference of Human Development, April 1976.

Summary: A project to develop the parents' educational role in the home and to increase interaction between home and school significantly improved children's scores on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills.

This project, developed by the staff of the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Center in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, with a grant from the Office of Child Development, tested the contention that the most important goal of the schools is to provide support for the parents' educational role in the home, and that more interaction between home and school will benefit a child academically and help to develop success-related behavior traits.

One hundred kindergarteners were selected from each of four experimental and four control schools. At the beginning and end of the school year, they were all tested on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills to compare their development.

The project staff trained teams of four volunteer parent home-school coordinators for each school at a summer workshop, also inviting all interested parents. Throughout the school year, teams of teachers, parents, and the volunteer coordinators planned classroom activities.

The researchers found that some parent-initiated activities were particularly related to achievement, as measured by the test scores: reading books at home, using the library, guiding use of television, and helping with extracurricular lessons.

**Gillum, Ronald M.** **ED 144 007**
**"The Effects of Parent Involvement on Student Achievement in Three Michigan Performance Contracting Programs"**
**Paper presented at AERA Annual Meeting, NY, April 1977**

Summary: This study of three Michigan school districts that involved parents in performance contracts to improve children's reading skills, found that the district with the most comprehensive parent program scored the greatest gains.

In 1972, the Michigan legislature authorized funds for school districts to conduct performance contracts to improve reading skills in local schools. Three school districts developed programs with parent involvement components.

This study tried to determine if participating students had higher reading achievement than other students, and if there were a significant difference in reading achievement among the three performance contracting programs. Then it compared the three contracts to determine if differences in their parent

involvement features accounted for differences in reading achievement.

Nearly 2,000 disadvantaged students in second through sixth grades in 12 schools were tested at the beginning and end of the school year on the Stanford Achievement and the Metropolitan Achievement Tests. Then the later scores were compared with national norm tables to determine if student achievement was greater than would have been expected from their earlier scores. Averages were computed for each of the three districts.

The school districts let performance contracts to private organizations (e.g., Behavioral Research Laboratories), who designed and conducted special reading programs. The amount of pay they received was based on a sliding scale and adjusted according to the gains students made on standardized tests.

Parent involvement in each of the districts varied widely. District A conducted a community information program for parents and citizens. Each participating school principal held at least four informational meetings during the school year. District B only held an open house at the beginning of the year and presented demonstrations of the program at a PTA meeting. District C built an intensive in-service training program for administrators, parents and teachers into its contract. Forty parent leaders received training, then conducted sessions for the other parents, on their child's educational program, on cooperation at the school, and on reinforcing the child at home. In addition, both parents and schools received incentive vouchers redeemable for educational materials, and parents received stipends for attending meetings.

In all three districts, the participating students achieved significantly higher in reading than was expected, but District C students scored, on the average, significantly higher than those in Districts A and B. The only major difference among the design of the three programs was their parent involvement component.

"For most districts where parent involvement was 'pro forma' and consisted either of filling out a questionnaire or attending large group meetings, the achievement of the pupils was similar, but less than the achievement in the district where parents participated in deciding what was taught and had responsibility for working with the teachers and children."

**Goodson, Barbara D. and Robert D. Hess** **ED 136 967**
**"Parents as Teachers of Young Children: An Evaluative Review of Some Contemporary Concepts and Programs"**
**Bureau of Educational Personnel Development, DHEW, Office of Education, Washington, DC May 1975**

Summary: The researchers reviewed evaluations of 29 preschool programs for disadvantaged children to determine what effect their various parent-training features had on short and long-term gains in achievement. The programs were successful regardless of how parent involvement was organized.

This Department of Health, Education and Welfare-sponsored review of current preschool programs for disadvantaged children had three objectives: (1) to identify categories of parent involvement in early education, (2) to describe 29 programs that use parent involvement, and (3) to summarize the studies evaluating the programs' effectiveness. The researchers interviewed project directors and reviewed program evaluations to obtain their data. Although the authors did not visit any of the programs, they described them all at some length.

The programs reviewed all had a parent training f[illegible]e designed to teach parents how to prepare their [illegible]l aged children for school. Each was rated accordin[illegible] criteria: (1) the salience of the parent co[illegible] intensive the training, from home visits o[illegible]nt classes plus preschool classes for children [illegible] (verbal, sensory-motor, general cognitive, a[illegible] development principles); (3) teacher/parent [illegible]e, small groups, or one large group); (4) specifi[illegible]nt of structure (whether training is specific or g[illegible]ether structure is highly organized or unplanned). (N[illegible] of the participating families was involved in the programs' design or implementation.)

The criteria used to evaluate the effectiveness of the programs are: (1) immediate advantages on intelligence tests, (2) long-term advantages on intelligence or achievement tests, (3) advantage of program children in school performance, all compared to control children.

"As a group, the programs consistently produced significant immediate gains in children's IQ scores, seemed to show long-term effects on children's IQ and their school performance, and seemed to alter in a positive direction the teaching behavior of parents." (emphasis added)

Although some programs were more effective than others, there was no clear relationship between program design and outcome. The authors do not feel this means that program design is unimportant, but speculate that factors other than those

measured influenced effectiveness. They attribute the success of these programs to an increase in parents' awareness of their influence on their child's behavior, a more systematic focus on parent/child interaction in educational activities, an increase in verbal interaction, and an increase in parent responsiveness to the child.

**Gordon, Ira**
**"What Does Research Say About the Effects of Parent Involvement on Schooling?"**
**Paper for Annual Meeting of the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1978.**

Summary: This review of pertinent research indicates that the more comprehensive and long-lasting the parent involvement, the more effective it is likely to be, not just on children's achievement but on the quality of schools as institutions serving the community.

This thoughtful review of research on the effect of parent involvement on student achievement was written by a Professor at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, who had published a number of studies on the subject.

He divides parent involvement into several models: the Parent Impact Model (the influence of parents and the home on a child's learning patterns), the School Impact Model (direct parent involvement in the school, from volunteering to serving on governance councils), and the Community Impact Model (parent involvement in all possible roles, from teacher at home to active member of local community), and assesses the findings on each.

Most of the research has centered on parent intervention programs for preschool programs, and the evidence is consistently positive that there are significant, long-term effects, and that children whose families participated do better than comparable children for as long as ten years after the programs ended.

Parent impact programs for school-aged children have not been as thoroughly researched, but the data show that the quantity of home visits is the most important aspect of these programs. They are most effective when carefully planned, last at least a year, have an educational focus, and include as their major delivery system parents working at home with their children.

Gordon found almost no research on the effect of the school impact model on student achievement, partially because it is much more difficult to study.

On the community impact model (the Follow Through program is a good example of this), research indicates that the effect on achievement is strong and positive. Children whose parents are directly (rather than indirectly) involved over a period of years, beginning in preschool, score higher on achievement tests than other children. The effect seems to be greater on second children than on first.

He concludes that the more comprehensive and long-lasting the parent involvement, in all roles rather than concentrated in one or two, the more effective it is likely to be. Furthermore, the effects are not evident just in children's achievement but in the quality of schools as institutions serving the community.

**Gotts, E. E.**
**"Long-term Effects of a Home-Oriented Preschool Program"**
**Childhood Education, Vol. 56, 1980 pp. 228-234**

Summary: A longitudinal study of Project HOPE (Home-Oriented Preschool Education) showed that children aged 3-5 whose parents were trained (by paraprofessionals, in the home) to augment daily lessons broadcast on television, showed consistently higher achievement through the first few years of their school careers than children who received only TV lessons.

The first stage of Project HOPE involved three variables: (1) daily TV lessons to 3-5 year-olds, along with weekly printed Parent Guides for follow-up activities; (2) weekly visits from paraprofessionals to assist the parents in teaching; and (3) a weekly half-day playgroup with other children, as a precursor of school society. The subjects were divided into three groups, defined by the combination of these variables to which they were exposed: (A) received TV lessons only; (B) received TV plus visits; (C) received lessons plus visits plus the playgroup.

All three groups outperformed an outside control group on the Appalachia Preschool Test and the Frostig Test of Visual Perception. The groups receiving parent-training visits (B & C) outpointed the TV-only group (A) as well, and also showed significant gains in Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test scores. The playgroup variable showed no significant effect.

Five years later a follow-up study was done with better than 50% of the original sample (341 out of 600). The TV-only group became the control for the follow-up evaluation, with the home visits/parent training as the single variable. The children

were now in grades 3-7, and had acquired grade-point averages and basic skills test scores, which the researchers used, along with attendance figures, to evaluate the program effects. The parent-trained group showed far greater achievement in all three areas than the TV-only group.

A second follow-up on the same children two years later (now in grades 5-9) showed much the same difference, including results from emotional development instruments and interviews with parents.

In a corollary assessment the researchers scored all program parents for a quality called "generativity," defined as "the role of caring for and nurturing the child toward psychosocial maturity." High generativity scores were correlated with higher grade-point-average and higher scores on the Educational Development Series tests.

**Gross, Mary** **ED 102 666**
**"Combined Human Efforts in Elevating Achievement at the Wheatley School, Washington, DC"**
**Ed.D. Practicum, Nova University, 1974**

Summary: A comprehensive program of parent involvement at a large inner-city elementary school produced significant gains in the students' reading and math scores.

Wheatley School was a small, overcrowded pre-kindergarten through sixth grade elementary school serving a largely black and disadvantaged neighborhood in Washington, D.C. Collaborating with the school's Title I program, this practicum implemented a comprehensive parent involvement strategy, more than doubling the average number of parents participating in various activities.

Over 800 students in grades 1-6 were tested in reading and mathematics at the end of the 1973-74 school year; their scores were compared with those from the end of the previous year.

Parent involvement consisted of (1) providing parents with "success reports" via written notes, fliers, home visits, and telephone calls, (2) holding informal parent group discussions, (3) encouraging parents to contact other parents, (4) sending home ideas for parents to work with children, (5) sending home notices of books, films, TV programs and cultural activities, (6) recruiting parents to participate in the afterschool parent program, (7) organizing parent-teacher mini-workshops. In addition, a continuing education and counselling program was established after school.

All grades showed a significant increase in both reading and math scores. The gains were highest in the early grades, with a 20 percent increase in the number of first grade students reading at grade level, descending steadily to a 5.5 percent increase in sixth grade students reading at grade level.

The school instituted a comprehensive improvement program that included staff development, expanded curriculum, continuing education for adults, and counselling, in addition to parent involvement. The data do not attempt to isolate the effects of the whole program from those of the parent involvement program.

**Guinagh, Barry and Ira Gordon** **ED 135 469**
**"School Performance as a Function of Early Stimulation"**
**Florida University, Gainesville, Institute for Development of Human Resources, December 1976**

Summary: An early childhood program training mothers in how to use learning materials at home produced significant advances in reading and math tests when the children entered school, which were maintained at least through the third grade.

This longitudinal study of 91 representative graduates of parent education projects attempted to determine whether the project produced lasting effects on school performance and home-school relations.

The authors compared assignments to special education programs and reading and math scores for up to six years following the end of the program for three groups of children: those involved for 2-3 years, beginning when the child was under one year old; those involved for one year; and those in a control group. All were randomly assigned to these groups at entry into the program.

The parent program consisted of home visits twice every three weeks by a paraprofessional, each lasting about an hour, where mothers were shown how to use materials in learning activities with their children at home. The program ended on the child's third birthday. When tested at the beginning of first grade, three years after finishing the early education program, and again during third grade, the two treatment groups had many fewer assignments to special education classes (under 5 percent, as compared to 25 percent for the control group), and the 2-3 year group had significantly higher scores on reading and math tests than the control group.

The researchers are encouraged that a home visit program using locally recruited paraprofessionals can be sustained for 2-3 years, using simple materials, and can lead to gains that last through the fourth grade.

**Herman, Joan L. and Jennie P. Yeh** **ED 206 963**
**"Some Effects of Parent Involvement in Schools"**
**Center for the Study of Evaluation, Graduate School of Education, University of California at Los Angeles**
**Paper for AERA Annual Meeting, Boston, April 1980**

Summary: This study of parent involvement in 250 California elementary schools found a positive connection between student achievement and to parent satisfaction with the school.

Drawn from evaluation data collected in 1976 on California's Early Childhood Education program, this study explores the influence of parent involvement on students' success in school and the relative effects of different aspects of parent involvement. From each of 256 schools, the researchers randomly selected two second grade and two third grade classrooms for study. Teachers, a sample of parents in each classroom, and the school principals responded to questionnaires; and in 72 of the schools, reading and math tests were given to the students. "Outcomes" were defined as parent satisfaction (on a 1-5 scale), and student achievement, the sum of standardized classroom scores on the tests.

Parent involvement was broken down into several categories: school-home communication, parent awareness of school operations, parent influence, parent participation in school functions and activities, and teacher-parent relations.

The findings show a significant relationship between parent involvement, especially participation in school activities, and student achievement, and also between parent involvement, especially influence in decision making and good parent-teacher relationships, and parent satisfaction. Parent involvement is important, therefore, both to student achievement and to parent satisfaction.

Although not directly correlated in this study, the connection between parent satisfaction and student achievement is significant, for parents' positive perceptions of their influence and relationships with teachers affect their participation in school activities, which in turn has a positive effect on student achievement.

**Irvine, David J.** **ED 176 893**
**"Parent Involvement Affects Children's Cognitive Growth"**
**University of the State of New York, State Education Department, Division of Research, Albany, August 1979**

Summary: For disadvantaged children in an experimental pre-kindergarten program, parent involvement had a highly

significant effect on reasoning, verbal concepts, and school-related skills.

This analysis was designed to determine whether the amount of time parents were involved in an experimental pre-kindergarten program in New York state was related to the performance of their 4-year-old children on each of three measures of cognitive achievement. Controls were introduced to test whether the involvement is actually related to achievement, rather than to other factors, such as levels of family education and income, or children's age and previous performance.

Parent involvement included school visits, home visits by school personnel, meetings, employment in the program, and incidental contacts. Five levels of involvement were determined according to the number of hours the parents were involved over the school year (50, 100, 150, or 200 hours).

For general reasoning, as measured by the Walker Readiness Test for Disadvantaged Children, the author found that parent involvement had a "highly significant effect." Children's scores varied directly with the number of hours of their parents' involvement, controlling for all other factors.

For school-related knowledge and skills, as measured by the Cooperative Preschool Inventory, Irvine also found that parent involvement had a highly significant effect, controlling for other factors.

For knowledge of verbal concepts, as measured by the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test, there was a highly significant relationship between parent involvement and achievement, with the greatest effect for children who had started out with lowest scores.

**Jencks, Christopher**
**"The Coleman Report and the Conventional Wisdom"**
In Frederick Mosteller and Daniel Moynihan (eds), **On Equality of Educational Opportunity**, New York, Vintage, 1972

Jencks reanalyzed the 1966 Coleman data for 285 urban elementary schools and found that schools with an active parent-teacher organization averaged higher in student achievement than those with an inactive group or none at all.

**Karraker, R. J.**
**"Increasing Academic Performance Through Home-Managed Contingency Programs"**
**Published in The Journal of School Psychology, Vol 10, #2, 1972**

Summary: Second-grade students improved their math achievement when their parents rewarded them for good performance.

This study attempted to determine whether the math performance of 16 students in three second grade classes could be improved by enlisting the rewarding power of the parents. Parents were informed of the program by three methods, and the children's performance on math exercises over 40 days and under varied circumstances was recorded.

Parents were asked to choose a reward their child would like to have and to give that reward to the child when presented with a daily report card showing that his performance either matched or exceeded his previous day's performance.

The study showed that during the time when the rewards were being offered, all the children improved their performance; when the rewards were withdrawn, they slacked off. The results did not vary according to how the parents were informed of the program. (see Barth)

**Lazar, Irving and Richard B. Darlington** **ED 175 523**
**"Summary: Lasting Effects After Preschool"**
**Consortium for Longitudinal Studies, Cornell University, 1978**

Summary: Long-term study of 11 early childhood projects involving parents shows that participating children performed better in school and had significantly fewer assignments to special education classes or grade retentions than control children for many years after they completed the projects.

This report for the Education Commission of the States is a summary analysis of the lasting effects of preschool interventional projects for predominantly black, lower-income children. Data on over 2,000 children were gathered from 11 carefully designed projects that were conducted around the country during the 1960's. Follow up data were collected on both subject and control children in 1976-77, and compared to determine if the pre-school projects still had measurable effects on the children's performance in school.

Basically, the programs studied fall into three categories: 1) center-based, with a nursery school type program where parents visited and observed; 2) home-based with educational efforts directed toward training the mother as a major instrument of

influence in the child's life; and 3) combined home/center, with a nursery school program combined with periodic home visits.

The researchers found that both individually and as a group the programs had lasting effects on the children's performance in school. Early education programs significantly reduced the number of children assigned to special education classes or retained in grade, regardless of their initial abilities or home background, and increased children's scores on fourth grade math and reading tests. Graduates of all the projects maintained higher IQ scores for up to three years; graduates of three of the projects maintained higher IQ scores 10-15 years later. In addition, children who attended preschool were more likely to have attitudes related to achievement, and their mothers were more likely to have higher aspirations for them.

When the researchers attempted to determine if one program design was more effective than another, they found all the programs to be about equally effective with all types of children, whether high or low IQ, male or female, educated or uneducated parents, etc.

Although parent involvement was not isolated and separately measured as a factor in program effectiveness, largely because there was substantial parent involvement in all the programs studied, the researchers feel that it is an integral part of a "cluster" of factors essential to program success. They also cautioned that a program must be well designed to be effective.

**Leler, Hazel**
**"Parent Education and Involvement in Relation to the Schools and to Parents of School-Aged Children"**
**In Ron Haskins and Diane Addams (ed), Parent Education and Public Policy, ABLEX Publishing Co., Norwood, N.J., 1983**

Summary: An extensive and rigorous review of 48 studies of educational programs with parent involvement found that the fuller the participation of parents, the more effective were the results obtained.

In this review, largely of unpublished studies or doctoral dissertations, the author analyzes the effects of various parent education programs on student achievement. The studies are classified according to Ira Gordon's three models of parent involvement, described in some detail, and their effects summarized at the end of each section.

Gordon's three models, which are discussed elsewhere in this bibliography (see "What Does Research Say About the Effects of Parent Involvement on Schooling?"), are: the Parent Impact

Model, the School Impact Model, and the Community Impact Model.

Parent Impact Model: Most of the studies reviewed looked at the effects of training parents to help their children by reinforcing at home what they were learning at school. Of 18 studies, 13 showed positive effects on one or more variables. Not one showed any negative results.

A second group of studies looked at "parenting" programs such as Parent Effectiveness Training. Eight of 12 studies showed positive effects on achievement for students whose parents participated in workshops to improve their child-rearing skills. Again, none had any negative results.

School Impact Model: These very few studies examined the experience of involving parents in decision-making roles. They found that educators, parents, administrators, and school board members all would like more parent impact on decision-making. There were no studies that looked at the effect of this model on achievement.

Community Impact Model: The primary examples of this model lie in the Parent Education Follow Through Program developed by Ira Gordon and his associates (see Revicki, Olmsted and Rubin); parents are involved in all possible roles from home tutors to decision-makers. All studies in this category produced positive results on student achievement.

The author concludes that the approaches with the most potential are those where parents play a variety of roles, including decision-making, and where there is a structured program of training, for both parents and school personnel.

**Mayeske, George W.** **ED 102 666**
**A Study of the Achievement of Our Nation's Students**
**Washington, DC, U. S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, 1973.**

Summary: This massive reanalysis of the 1966 Coleman report concluded that parent expectations and supportive activities are crucial to student achievement.

This reanalysis of the data from the Coleman Survey of Educational Opportunity concluded that certain "family process" variables play a key role in student achievement.

When Mayeske examined the role that family structure and stability plays in student achievement, he found the effect was relatively small for both white and black students, although larger for other minority groups. There was also a tendency

for the effects to be greater for boys than girls. In looking for an explanation for the unexpectedly similar results for blacks and whites, when the incidence of family disruption is greater for blacks, he examined the effects of family process and identified three motivational variables that intervene between the structural aspects of the family and student achievement:

1. The students' and parents' expectations for academic performance.

2. The extent to which they both engaged in activities supportive of these expectations.

3. The students' attitude toward the benefits of education and hard work as an antecedent of success.

**McDill, Edward L.; Leo Rigsby; and Edmond Meyers ED 030 205**
**"Educational Climates of High Schools: Their Effects and Sources"**
**Johns Hopkins University Center for the Study of Social Organization of Schools, Baltimore, April 1969**

Summary: In a large nationwide study, parent involvement was found to be the critical factor in the achievement and aspirations of high school students.

This large-scale study sponsored by the U. S. Office of Education explored three problems: identification of different dimensions of education and social climates of high schools, their relative effect on academic performance and college plans of students, and the relationship between sources of climate on the achievement and college plans of students.

The researchers selected by random sample twenty public high schools in eight states, then sent questionnaires to over 20,000 students, 1,000 faculty members, and all 20 principals. Two academic tests were administered to all the students in the schools, the Aptitude for Abstract Reasoning and Achievement in Math tests from Project TALENT.

Parent involvement in the high school was identified as a "climate source variable" and correlated with achievement measures and college plans.

The level of parent involvement was determined by faculty responses to three questions: whether parents are apathetic to school policies, whether parents seem interested in their children's progress, and whether parents often ask for appointments with teachers to discuss their children's school work.

The authors conclude that the degree of parental and community interest in quality education is "the critical factor in explaining the impact of the high school environment on the achievement and educational aspirations of students," (emphasis added) Not only did parent involvement have a "substantial effect on math achievement and college plans," it also had a significant effect on the achievement and aspirations of students with comparable ability and family educational background.

In conclusion, they quote the former U.S. Commissioner of Education Harold Howe:

> In all communities -- rural and suburban, but especially inner-city -- the principal needs to take the initiative in tailoring his school to the character of the community. He needs to solicit parent participation and to help parents understand what kind of contributions they can make. The principal ought to be welcoming parents and letting them see how the school is run and explain to them its policies and programs. He should at the same time be converting the school into a community resource that offers adults a center for community activities, for instruction in practical subjects as well as leisure-time activities.

**Mowry, Charles** **ED 080 216**
**Midco Educational Associates, Inc. (Denver, Colorado)**
**"Investigation of the Effects of Parent Participation in Head Start: Non-Technical Report"**
**Department of Health, Education and Welfare, Washington, DC, November 1972**

Summary: Head Start centers with high levels of parent involvement consistently had children who performed higher on standardized tests, parents who were more satisfied, and communities that were more responsive to the disadvantaged, than centers with low parent involvement.

The Head Start program mandates parent involvement in every local project. This study looks at three types: 1) parents as decision makers, 2) parents as learners, 3) parents as paid employees in Head Start. The relationship of these roles to four areas of the program was then investigated: quality of the program, change in community institutions, Head Start children, parents of Head Start children.

From a 10 percent random sample, the researchers selected for study twenty Head Start centers across the United States. Then

they identified from structured interviews five centers high in parent involvement opportunities, five low in opportunities, and ten mixed in types of opportunities. At each center, approximately 20 parent-child pairs were studied, and these were also broken down into high-low categories from questionnaires.

To measure effects on the parents, self-report questionnaires were used; on the children, standardized tests measuring cognitive and intellectual development, school readiness, self-concept and social adjustment. To measure program quality, researchers used staff questionnaires; and for community change, structured group interviews with local citizens and parents.

In centers where parent involvement was not high, parents felt less able to influence their school systems and less in control of things generally. Parents who were highly involved saw themselves as more skilled, successful, and satisfied. Also, parents who were more highly involved in Head Start tended to become more involved in the community after their children graduated from the program.

Centers with high levels of parent involvement had better results on the children's achievement (verbal intelligence, self-concept, motor tests, behavior in classroom and home). The type of parent involvement did not appear to make a difference as much as the extent of parent involvement.

Centers that were high on parent involvement consistently performed better on nearly all measures of program quality, and were located in communities where significantly greater positive changes were reported in local institutions.

**Olmsted, Patricia P., and Roberta I. Rubin** **ED 284 839**
**"Linking Parent Behaviors to Child Achievement: Four Evaluation Studies from the Parent Education Follow Through Program"**
**Studies in Educational Evaluation; Vol. 8, 1982 pp. 317-25**

Summary: Four intensive studies of the Parent Education Follow-Through Program found that parents trained to work with their children and to play other roles in the program spontaneously improved their parent teaching behavior at home and their children's performance in reading and math.

The Parent Education Follow Through Program (PEFTP) includes parents in the educational process, providing roles of participation ranging from "teacher of own child" (at home) to

"paid paraprofessional" (training other parents in their homes.) Home learning activities emphasize certain "Desirable Teaching Behaviors (DTB's)" aimed at inspiring a strong thinking relationship between parent and child. At the time of the studies, the PEFTP was serving 4,000 children per year in eight communities around the United States.

These studies had two steps: first, the researchers verified and measured aspects of parent behavior within program activities; second, the researchers assessed the relationship between these behaviors and student achievement. In three of the studies (the fourth, by Dennis Revicki 1981, is treated separately, below), information about parent behavior was obtained through observation or detailed interviews. Students' standardized test scores in reading and math served as the measure of achievement.

Olmsted (1981) examined the use of DTBs by project parents and a comparable group of non-program parents. Parents were videotaped interacting with their first-grade children on two instructional tasks, and the DTBs -- which relate to style and pace of explaining and questioning -- were assessed. Program parents used significantly more of these behaviors than the control parents. In the second stage of the study, a significant correlation was found between total number of DTBs used by project parents and their children's scores for both reading and math on the Stanford Achievement Test, providing "further evidence of a relationship between parental teaching behavior and child school performance."

B. H. Ellis (1980) assessed the parents' implementation of home learning activities by the Level of Use methodology, and then examined the relationship between level of use and student achievement in reading and math. The experimental group included families of first-graders who had begun the PEFTP in kindergarten; control families of first-graders had similar ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds but had not participated in the program.

The first phase of the study showed that program parents used the home activities at a very high level, while non-program families did not use them at all. Indeed, the program parents' level of use was so high that they were "utilizing behaviors which suggest an internalization of the concept or purpose of Home Learning Activities and a sense of partnership or ownership in the program since they feel comfortable developing variations or modifications..." In the second phase of study, level of use was correlated with higher reading achievement for program families, but no significant relationship was found between level of use and math achievement.

B. H. Chapman (1981) examined the question-asking behavior of

PEFTP parents, and the relationship between question-asking behavior and student achievement in reading. The investigator developed a system to categorize parents' questions into seven cognitive and two non-cognitive classifications, and then videotaped parents of a PEFTP group and a non-program group as they read a book with their first-grade children. The videotapes were then evaluated and coded for number and classification of parent questions. There was no difference in the number of questions asked by program and non-program parents; however, the PEFTP parent asked significantly more questions in five categories designated "higher level cognitive categories." No significant relationship was found between the total number of questions asked and student reading achievement. But for the program group 45 percent of the variance in child reading achievement was accounted for by the categories of questions asked.

The authors suggest a special importance in these results because parental question style is only indirectly related to the PEFTP: the results suggest a general spreading of good parental teaching behavior, beyond the DTBs in which the parents are trained, and a relationship between such untrained teaching techniques and student achievement. "These in-depth studies of program impact on parents and the relationship between parental behaviors and child behaviors provide valuable evidence which presents an even stronger case for the inclusion of parents as major participants in the education of their children."

**Phillips, Susan D; Michael C. Smith; and John F. Witte "Parents and Schools" Staff Report to the Study Commission on the Quality of Education in the Metropolitan Milwaukee Schools, 735 Water St., Suite 730, Milwaukee, WI, 1985.**

Summary: A study of 22 school districts in the metropolitan Milwaukee area found that parent involvement is associated with higher school performance regardless of the income level of families served, the grade level of the school, or the location of the school.

Eighth in a series about the Milwaukee area public schools, this report studies the variations in parent involvement among 22 local school districts. The authors cover district policies and whether they function as intended, types of parent involvement in different schools and which ones parent organization leaders felt were most important, attitudes of teachers, principals, and parents about parent involvement, and whether parent involvement affects school performance.

In addition to the general data already collected on student

performance and family characteristics of all schools in the districts studied, Study Commission staff conducted personal and telephone interviews with school district superintendents and school board presidents, a mail survey of parent organization presidents, and telephone surveys of 1594 parents in 12 selected schools.

The findings are organized by study topics:

> Parent involvement policies: District policies vary considerably. Only about a third have detailed policies, another third have no policies at all. A model policy is included.
>
> Parent organization survey: Organizations in the suburbs have almost twice the number of active members as those in the city. While they spend most of their time in fund raising and communications, their leaders felt they should have more influence in instructional activities, school policies and standards, and personnel decisions.
>
> Teacher and principal attitudes: Teachers reported significantly more parent involvement at the elementary level than in high schools and judged that involvement to be more positive. Principals felt more positive about parent involvement than teachers, and felt that parents should be more active in all areas except in school policy and personnel.
>
> Parent responses: Parent assessment of schools closely matched school performance as measured by objective outcome data. Parents whose children attend higher performing schools reported that they were much more active than those whose children are in poorer schools. The level of reported activity was much lower at the high school level.
>
> Parent involvement and school performance: Higher performing schools have considerably greater parent involvement, according to multiple regression analysis. Parents from higher achieving schools reported more pre-school education and higher expectations for their children.

The authors conclude:

> What these findings suggest is that it is not simply the amount of time parents spend interacting in schools or the effectiveness of that interaction...The findings mean that parent actions in the home and the psychological process of creating positive expectations also are likely to matter in school performance. Those schools that do well

are likely to have active parent organizations, numerous volunteers, and a high frequency of positive interactions between parents and teachers, but those actions will be backed up by and begin with early educational nurturing and positive educational expectations for the child. Poor, uneducated single parents are less likely to be able to afford, or perhaps understand the importance of, either school or home involvement. Thus without fundamental changes, the reinforcing cycle will continue.

**Radin, Norma** **ED 010 078**
**"The Impact of a Kindergarten Home Counseling Program"**
**Exceptional Children, December 1969.**

Summary: High IQ children in an experimental kindergarten program whose mothers had counseling in how to use home teaching materials showed greater cognitive growth than other children in the program.

This study of a supplementary kindergarten enrichment program in the Ypsilanti, Michigan, public schools tested the relative effects of a supplementary learning experience and of home counseling on the children's cognitive growth. All the children had some preschool experience and high scores on the Stanford-Binet or other IQ tests.

The children were divided into three groups. Group I attended a half day of kindergarten plus a half day of a Piaget-style supplementary class, and also receive bi-weekly visits by a home counselor. Group II attended both classes but had no home visits. Group III, the control, attended only a half day of kindergarten. All children were tested twice, a year apart, on the Metropolitan Reading Readiness Test and the Cognitive Home Environment Scale.

The Group I mothers were treated as resources for their children and shown how to use materials found in the home to reinforce what was being taught in the classroom.

Although all the children made significant gains, those showing the most growth, especially on the Stanford-Binet test, were in Group I and receiving the home involvement program. The other two groups were almost identical to one another in results.

When the researchers checked further, they found that the children who were in Group I and who had also had home involvement in preschool, made the highest gains of all.

**Radin, Norma** **ED 067 152**
**"Three Degrees of Maternal Involvement in a Preschool Program: Impact on Mothers and Children"**
**Child Development, December 1972, pp. 1355-1364.**

Summary: Lower IQ children in an experimental preschool program whose mothers had counseling in home teaching techniques showed greater gains in achievement than children whose mothers were not involved.

This is a continuation of the study of an experimental preschool program in Ypsilanti, Michigan, testing the relative effects of degrees of parent involvement on children's cognitive growth. In this phase, three groups of children with lower IQ scores (85-98) on the Stanford-Binet test, were selected from a Piaget-style preschool program.

Group A attended 4-1/2 hours a week of preschool; their mothers observed bi-weekly tutorial sessions and were encouraged to continue the techniques at home; also the mothers attended weekly group meetings with social workers on home stimulation of intellectual growth. Group B was treated the same, except that there were no group meetings for the mothers. The mothers of Group C children were not involved at all.

Each group was tested using the Stanford-Binet and Peabody Picture Vocabulary tests. One year after leaving the program, a pre-selected group of children was given follow-up tests on the Wechsler Preschool and Primary Scale of Intelligence and the Peabody Picture test.

At the end of the preschool year, all children showed significant gains on the tests, but at the end of kindergarten, only the Group A and Group B children, whose mothers had been involved, showed continue growth in verbal achievement.

**Rankin, Paul T.** **ED 017 550**
**"The Relationship Between Parent Behavior and Achievement of Inner-City Elementary School Children"**
**Paper presented at AERA Convention, February 1967.**

Summary: Children who are high achievers are much more likely to have active, interested and involved parents than children who are low achievers.

To determine what kinds of parent behavior are related to the scholastic achievement of inner-city elementary school children, Rankin picked 32 low achievers and 32 high achievers from 241 third and fourth graders at a school in Detroit. The tests used to determine achievement levels were the California

Achievement Test and the Iowa Test of Basic Skills, and to measure aptitude levels, the Detroit Primary Learning Aptitude Test and the Beginning First Grade Intelligence Test. Children were ranked according to the difference between their achievement and aptitude scores, from highest achievers to lowest underachievers. Those selected for study were from the top and the bottom of the list, excluding those whose mothers were not available for interview.

The parent interview schedule included 123 questions designed to determine whether parents engaged in the kind of behavior thought to have an influence on student achievement. Rankin then analyzed the data to see whether the parents of high achievers behaved differently from the parents of low achievers.

The types of behavior found to influence achievement significantly were providing experiences for children (e.g., playing games, attending church, talking), showing interest in the children's school activities (e.g., requiring children to make high marks, talking about school activities, helping with difficult homework), developing the children's interest in reading, and taking the initiative in contacting school personnel (e.g., conferring with the principal).

**Revicki, Dennis A.** **ED 206 645**
**"The Relationship among Socioeconomic Status, Home Environment, Parent Involvement, Child Self-Concept, and Child Achievement," 1981**

Summary: There is a positive interrelationship between parent involvement, factors known to be associated with student achievement (such as self-acceptance, home learning activities, and high educational and occupational expectations), and student scores on standardized reading and math tests.

The researchers studied a sample of 321 second grade children and their families from two Parent Education Follow-Through Programs (Yakima, Washington; and Tampa, Florida) to investigate the relationship among a variety of factors associated with student achievement: socioeconomic status, size of the family, home environment, parent involvement, and child self-concept. Student achievement was measured by scores on the Stanford Achievement Test and the Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills. The data from Yakima were analyzed separately and compared to that from Tampa to check the reliability of the model.

Parent involvement was defined as:

1. Classroom volunteering, in instructional tasks.
2. Classroom volunteering, in non-instructional tasks.
3. Attendance at Parent Advisory Committee meetings.
4. Participation in Parent Advisory Committee activities.

Although the program served predominantly low-income families, it was clear that the higher the income, the more likely parents were to be actively involved. Also, the larger the family, the less likely were parents to be actively involved. Although income level is generally related to student achievement (the higher, the better), this study found that it was far more related to math scores than to reading.

The number of years participating in the program and home visits by program staff were significantly associated with higher reading achievement. Math achievement was affected only by home visits. (see Epstein)

In terms of home environment, parent expectations for future educational and occupational attainment were related to reading scores, and language stimulation and parent expectations were related to math scores. The child's sense of self acceptance was associated with reading achievement.

Active parent involvement had a positive influence on the quantity of verbal stimulation and on parent expectations about children's educational and occupational attainment. Active parent involvement was also related directly to increases in student achievement and, to a lesser extent, the child's self-acceptance.

**Rich, Dorothy**
**"The Relationship of the Home Learning Lab Technique to First Grade Student Achievement"**
**Dissertation, Catholic University of America, 1976**

Summary: Parents who use simple, learning-at-home techniques to tutor their children can help to raise their children's achievement in reading.

To test the effectiveness of teacher-designed "Home Learning Lab" activities for parents to use with their children, The Home and School Institute conducted a study of 218 first graders randomly selected from Washington, D.C. Catholic schools and assigned half to the experimental group, half to control. Both groups were tested twice on the McGraw-Hill Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills.

The treatment consisted of eight activities, each written

recipe-style on a single piece of paper, that parents and children working together at home could use to reinforce and supplement reading and math. Preceded only by a letter of explanation, teachers sent home the papers from school, one every two weeks for 16 weeks.

The experimental group achieved statistically higher scores in reading than the control group. The predominantly black, experimental classes scored significantly higher on both reading and math.

This dissertation is important because the "recipes" developed have been used successfully in a number of other school systems, and because they have been published in a book by Simon & Schuster, Parents and Schools Working Together.

**Schlamberg, Lawrence B. and Chong-Hee Chun**
**"The Influence of Family on Educational and Occupational Achievement"**
**Department of Family and Child Ecology, Michigan State University**
**Paper presented at the American Association for the Advancement of Science Annual Meeting, Philadelphia, PA 1986**

Summary: A fourteen-year longitudinal study of rural, low-income youth found that the family makes significant contributions to the attainment of educational and occupational goals.

In 1969, 1202 students attending fifth and sixth grades in rural, low-income areas in six southeastern states were surveyed, along with their mothers. In 1975, 1978, and 1983, subsamples of the original group were re-interviewed, as high school students, young adults, and as adults. Using a causal/path model technique to assess the relative effects of various important influences on educational and occupational attainment, the authors looked at family background, characteristics of the students (mental ability, self-concept, academic motivation), achievement motivation, and attitudes of family members and significant others.

The total effect of family influence on students' ability to attain their occupational goals was greater than the effects of both the students' characteristics and their educational attainment. The influence of family on educational attainment was even more significant. This means that the expectations of parents and their own level of attainment had a primary influence on their children's goals and whether they are able to attain them. The more confidence a high school male had that he would achieve his desired occupation, the more likely he was to attain it as a young adult. For girls, only ten

percent who aspired to a high-level occupation actually attained it; the higher their mothers' educational level, the more likely they were to succeed.

The authors conclude in their summary that their findings support the need for educators to involve the family in school learning activities, so that higher expectations can be reinforced.

**Scott, Ralph and Arthur Davis, Jr.** **ED 183 682**
**"Preschool Education and Busing: Do We Have Our Priorities Straight?"**
**Paper presented to the National Urban Education Association, November 1979**

Summary: Disadvantaged children who participated in a three-year preschool enrichment program with strong parent involvement remained more advanced in basic skills through the third grade.

This study evaluates the Home Start Program in Waterloo, Iowa, which offered prekindergarten enrichment, centered in the home, to 89 children over a three-year period. Older siblings of 44 of the children served as control subjects. Evaluative testing was done at the beginning of the program, using the Iowa Tests of Preschool Development, during the program's last year, while the children were in an in-school program, using the Learning Reading System Seriation Test, and when the children reached the third grade, using the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS). Control group comparisons were possible only on the third grade ITBS scores.

Paraprofessional home workers met once a week with mothers or guardians to hold family-like conversations about family interactions, the child's activities, and the types of books and toys that were available from the program's library. Staff met regularly to evaluate the results of these visits. One year before kindergarten, the children attended an enrichment program for 2-1/2 hours a day.

Probably because of socioeconomic factors, the researchers found no evidence that white children gained from the program. Black children, however, scored significantly higher on the ITBS, especially in math problems, where the Home Start graduates' scores averaged 1.2 grade equivalences higher than their older siblings.

**Sinclair, Robert L. (ed), Don Davies, Mario Fantini, Ward Ghory, Sara Lawrence Lightfoot, and Ralph W. Tyler**
**"A Two-Way Street: Home-School Cooperation in Curriculum Decision-Making"**
**Institute for Responsive Education, Boston, 1980**

This collection of thoughtful papers, defining curriculum in its broadest sense, is replete with references to unpublished or hard-to-find studies linking parent involvement with student achievement. Fantini considers in historical and theoretical perspective the roles parents and the community play in public schools and presents a critical analysis of the research. Ghory subjects a number of current assumptions about teacher-parent relationships to close scrutiny and rewrites them, referring to a number of interesting studies. Lightfoot explores family-school relationships, pointing out that the different roles each is expected to play create conflict and misunderstanding that inhibit student achievement.

**Stearns, Miriam Sherman and Susan Peterson, et.al. ED 088 588**
**"Parent Involvement in Compensatory Education Programs: Definitions and Findings"**
**Menlo Park Educational Policy Research Center, Stanford Research Institute, August 1973**

Summary: This major review of federal evaluation reports suggests that there is a connection between parent involvement and institutional change and that involving parents as tutors and trainers can have positive effects on children's IQ scores.

This is the first major review of evaluation data on federal compensatory education programs that attempted to relate parent involvement to student achievement. At that early date in the history of these programs, there was rather little data showing measurable improvement in children's achievement from compensatory education programs. The authors, therefore, found it was difficult to correlate any features of the programs with success, much less to pinpoint parent involvement. It is a very thoughtful analysis, nevertheless, and explores a number of important issues.

In these programs, there are three major roles for parents to play: tutors, employees, and decision-makers. There is evidence that involving parents as trainers and tutors can improve children's performance, especially that of young, preschool children. The effects vary directly with the intensity and length of the program and appear in both the children's IQ scores and in parents' attitudes about themselves.

The findings on the effect of employing parents as classroom aides or community workers are sparse, largely because programs that do also introduce many other changes into the classroom. In preschool projects staffed primarily by paraprofessionals, "positive impacts on participating children have been demonstrated."

The effects of parent involvement in decision-making on children's academic performance are particularly difficult to measure and evaluate, because they cannot be easily isolated from other factors and because they take longer to show up.

The authors speculate on the reason why parent involvement should affect achievement, and reasons that the different roles parents play set certain chains of events in motion. When parents learn to teach their own children, they no only give their children new skills but also build their own feelings of competence. This in turn motivates the children to perform better, setting a cycle of success-reinforcement in motion (see diagram in introduction).

Stearns concludes that for parent involvement to be effective, it must be carefully organized, with clear guidelines for substantive participation.

**Tizard, J.; W.N. Schofield; and Jenny Hewison**
**"Collaboration Between Teachers and Parents in Assisting Children's Reading"**
**British Journal of Educational Psychology, 1982 (Vol. 52, Part 1, pp. 1-11)**

Summary: Children who practiced reading at home with parents made highly significant gains in reading achievement at school, in comparison with control group students and children who practiced at school with teachers.

All children in the middle infant (5-6 years), top infant, first-year junior, and second-year junior classes at six schools in a disadvantaged working-class area of London were studied over the course of two years. The 1900 students involved were divided into three comparable groups chosen at random.

Children in the experimental group read aloud to their parents 2-4 times a week, from books sent home with them from school; from time to time, parents received encouragement or tips on "good practice" from their children's teachers. A control group received no routine of extra reading time beyond school instruction. A third group received extra reading help about

twice a week at school, from a special teacher hired for the project; this teacher not only listened to the students read (duplicating the at-home experiment), but offered additional assistance in all aspects of the teaching of reading.

Students from the four grades were tested using a wide variety of reading achievement tests geared for their progress from one grade level to the next. The tests were administered before the interventions began, and then at the conclusion of the next three school years -- that is, until the first middle-infant students had become the last second-year juniors.

The results show "highly significant" gains in achievement for experimental group children of all grade levels compared to the control group and the children who received extra in-school help; between the latter two groups there was generally no significant difference in achievement. The researchers feel the study verifies earlier research indicating gains in achievement by students whose parents helped them read at home, and demonstrates the broad if ineffable power of parental involvement in being more effective even than extra-curricular involvement of teachers. (see Radin and Bronfenbrenner)

**Toomey, Derek**
**"Home-School Relations and Inequality in Education"**
**School of Education, La Trobe University, Melbourne, Australia**
**Address given to a Conference on Education and the Family,**
**Brigham Young University, February 1986**

Summary: A study of low-income schools in the state of Victoria, Australia, found that programs to encourage parent involvement in the development of young children's reading skills were successful in producing greater reading competence, especially for parents who had a high level of contact with the school.

In this retrospective review of a series of studies he conducted between 1982 and 1985, the author found that while programs to increase parent involvement in reading competence have positive effects, "the normal operation of home-school relations may actually increase educational inequality." That is, the tendency of teachers and staff to favor parents who are already involved works to shut out parents with fewer advantages and who tend to be more difficult to involve.

The model studied exhibited two variations on a form of parent participation: Parents are asked to support their children's education with activities in the home and (1) are invited to visit the school to receive information and advice; or (2) are visited at home and given information and encouragement.

The programs offering home visits were more successful in involving disadvantaged parents than were programs requiring parents to visit the school, but the programs requiring parents to visit the school produced higher gains in reading competence. The author speculates that this discrepancy is caused by bias: teachers favor parents who are willing to come to school, and the parents who come to school are more self-confident and committed to the program. A cycle of positive reinforcement leads to gains for those children whose parents come to school and shuts out families who are more comfortable at home.

Toomey presents an interesting typology of low-income parents:

| | | PARENTS HELP CHILD'S READING | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | Yes | No |
| PARENTS READILY VISIT SCHOOL | Yes | 1 | 3 |
| | No | 2 | 4 |

1. "Enthusiasts"
2. "Silent Majority"
3. "Ambiguous"
4. "Uninvolved"

The experience of the projects studied is that "the dynamics of 'normal' home-school relations converted a home-visit type of program into a 'volunteer' type of program in which especial benefits, or at least a high profile, goes to those families with parents who regularly visit the school."

While the parents who did receive home visits said they increased their self-confidence in helping with their children's education and in dealing with the school, they were also discouraged by the "in-group" of parents who were based at the school. Home visits became less frequent as the ease of working with parents at school increased, and the final result was that the school neglected the "silent majority" for the "enthusiasts."

**Wagenaar, Theodore C.** **ED 146 111**
**"School Achievement Level Vis-a-Vis Community Involvement and Support: An Empirical Assessment"**
**Ohio State University, Columbus, Hershon Center**
**Paper presented at Annual Meeting of American Sociological Association, September 1977.**

Summary: This study of the public schools in a large mid-western city found that schools with high achievement levels are more open to parent and community involvement and that more

closed schools have lower achievement levels and less community support.

The hypothesis of this study is that schools with high community involvement and support also have high levels of student achievement.

Wagenaar gathered data from 135 schools in a large mid-western city, to determine levels of community involvement and support and the average reading and math test scores for each school. Controlling for SES (socioeconomic status), to factor out any effects of class bias, and using average figures for each school to test the effect on the entire school's performance rather than on that of individual students, the data were correlated to determine the relationship between types of community support and involvement and levels of student achievement.

"Community involvement and support" was measured according to 29 separate items, or definitions, that covered fund raising and political support by active community groups, opportunities for parents to participate in school activities and meet with teachers, numbers of parents and citizens who participate in school meetings and functions, percentage of voters who participated in last school bond issue, numbers of times community groups use school facilities, numbers of contacts between principal or teachers and parents at school and at home, and the role of citizens in school policy decision, such as selecting curricula, hiring teachers, setting discipline procedures, and allocating the budget.

Most significantly related to achievement were the measures of community group support and fund raising, attending school meetings, and number of school functions. Also related was the number of times community groups use school facilities. Somewhat less related, but still significant, were discussion opportunities and school-parent contact. Neither of the two citizen participation in policy factors was found to be related to achievement.

> In sum . . . analysis indicates a generally positive relationship between school achievement level and such factors as behavioral involvement and support, use of school facilities, and an open communications atmosphere. But actual participation in decision-making is apparently unrelated to achievement (p.13).

The author speculates that more open school systems are more effective, and that a supportive and involved environment is more beneficial than a power-wielding environment. Because the study did control for SES influence, it suggests, contrary to Coleman's finding (1966), that home factors are more important

than school factors, that the school environment (level of community support) does make a difference.

**Walberg, H. J.; R. E. Bole; and H. C. Waxman (1980): "School-Based Family Socialization and Reading Achievement in the Inner-City."**
**Psychology in the Schools, 17, 509-514**

Summary: Students in grades 1-6, whose parents and teachers responded intensively to a city-wide program helping parents create academic support conditions in the home, gained .5 to .6 grade equivalents in reading comprehension over students less intensively involved.

In response to a survey where parents asked for more home-school cooperation and more community activities centered around education, joint parent-staff committees in Chicago initiated a program to help parents demonstrate encouragement at home to their school children. A contract signed by the superintendent, principal, teacher, parents, and student stipulated that the parents would (1) provide a special place in the home for study, (2) encourage the child daily by discussion, (3) attend to the student's progress in school and compliment the child on such gains, and (4) cooperate with the teacher in providing all of these things properly. More than 99% of the students in 41 classes (826 in grades 1-6) held such contracts signed by all parties.

A booklet of "school policies and academic activities" was distributed to 650 parents at an open house, as well as at parent-teacher visits and book fairs.

The Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) was administered to all of the children after one school year in the program. Two variables accounted for nearly all the reliable variance in post-test scores in analyses carried out with individuals and class medians as the units: program intensity and prior reading comprehension score ITBS. Program intensity was determined by whether a student's teacher had been designated by the school's principal as intensive in the use of parent-involvement, or not intensive. ITBS scores from the previous year served as the pre-test standardized reference.

Students and classroom groups "intensively exposed to the program" gained 1.1 grade equivalents on the ITBS administered after one year of the program; students "non-intensively exposed" gained .5 grade equivalent.

**Wellisch, Jean B.** **ED 133 361**
**"An In-Depth Study of Emergency School Aid Act Schools: 1974-1975"**
**Systems Development Corporation, Santa Monica, CA 1976**

Summary. Schools identified as having successful Emergency School Aid Act (ESAA) programs, where students improved significantly in reading and math achievement, also had high parent involvement in the classroom.

This is part of a larger study on the effectiveness of the federal ESAA program to reduce minority group isolation in the schools. For the larger, 3-year study, data were collected from matched pairs of sample schools participating in ESAA and control schools, to assess gains made by students in reading and math, using standardized achievement tests. Questionnaires were also used to provide information on programs, school policies, and perceptions of discrimination.

For the "in-depth" study of successful programs, a sub-sample of 24 schools was selected and matched, using both ESAA and control schools. Schools where at least two of the three grades tested showed improvement in either reading or math were defined as "successful." The remainder were classified "non-successful." Because of sampling difficulties, the study looked only at elementary schools (grades 3,4, and 5).

The researchers identified five "constructs" to determine their effect on student achievement:

- organizational climate
- parent and community involvement
- character of reading and math instruction
- resource use in reading and math instruction
- equality of educational opportunity.

Interviewer-observer teams of two studied from two to four schools in a series of intensive, two-week visits and gathered information on each construct. They were not informed of the status or test scores of their schools.

The parent involvement section tried to answer three questions:

- How much have the schools attempted to involve parents?
- How much are parents actually involved with the school and is that involvement related to the school's efforts?
- Are differences in the levels of parent involvement associated with differences in student achievement?

Several measures of the first two questions were designed and

each school was scored accordingly. It is interesting that most schools scored high. (Only four of the 24 fell on the low end of the scale.) The schools were then ranked according to their degree of parent involvement and this was correlated with their test scores.

In general, the researchers found that

1. Organizational climate (strong administrative leadership and training for new teachers) is associated with math gain.

2. Parent and community involvement was associated with <u>both</u> reading and math gains.

3. Reading and math program characteristics (using behavioral objectives, adequate instructional practice, less frequent use of positive reinforcement) were associated with both reading and math gains.

4. Reading and math resources use (i.e., remedial specialists) were associated with reading and math gains (proportional to amount spent per pupil).

The researchers then attempted to determine which factors contributed most to types of gain.

- For reading achievement, parent involvement in the classroom ranked <u>second</u> (of five factors), just under adequacy of instructional practice, and over behavioral objectives and costs for remedial specialists.

- For math achievement, parent involvement ranked <u>third</u> (of seven), just below percent minority enrollment and costs for remedial specialists, and above behavioral objectives and administrative leadership.

- A composite profile of a school with both math and reading gain includes:

  1. parent involvement in the classroom
  2. higher per-pupil costs for specialists
  3. use of behavioral objectives.

In their analysis of parent involvement, the researchers concluded that:

1. Parents are much more likely to participate in schools where teachers indicate that administrators assume responsibility for policy.

2. Parent/community involvement in the school is unrelated to the frequency of the school's promotional activities and meetings.

3. Schools that involve parents in the classroom were more successful in raising academic achievement. (Schools using aides who are not parents had lower achievement.)

4. There does not seem to be a relationship between parent involvement outside the classroom (as employees or on advisory committees) and student achievement.

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